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# The Hermeneutical Frameworks Of Fernando Canale And Fritz Guy: Sola And Prima Scriptura And The Science-Theology Relationship

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Abstract

THE HERMENEUTICAL FRAMEWORKS OF FERNANDO CANALE  
AND FRITZ GUY: *SOLA* AND *PRIMA SCRIPTURA* AND  
THE SCIENCE-THEOLOGY RELATIONSHIP

by

Ryan Nicholas Claude Brousson

Advisor: Martin Hanna, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE HERMENEUTICAL FRAMEWORKS OF FERNANDO CANALE AND FRITZ GUY: *SOLA* AND *PRIMA SCRIPTURA* AND THE SCIENCE-THEOLOGY RELATIONSHIP

Researcher: Ryan Nicholas Claude Brousson

Faculty Advisor: Martin Hanna, Ph.D.

Completed: July 2017

This thesis presents research on the hermeneutical frameworks of *sola* and *prima Scriptura* and how they affect the science-theology relationship. It specifically focuses on the writings of Fernando Canale and Fritz Guy who hold opposing views on both *sola* and *prima Scriptura* and the relationship between science and theology. Canale argues for a *sola Scriptura* framework with science governed by theology, whereas Guy argues for a *prima Scriptura* framework with science and theology working independently of each other.

This thesis begins with a brief historical overview of the issues and then moves into describing Canale's and Guy's views. It ends with an evaluation of their positions and some suggestions for a more comprehensive framework that can incorporate valuable

aspects of each scholar's proposals.

The research concludes that what is needed is a hermeneutical framework that combines *sola* and *prima Scriptura* principles (as indicated but not fully developed by Canale). Currently, Canale's and Guy's frameworks, viewed separately, do not take into account important aspects of the science-theology relationship. A combination *sola-prima* framework is helpful for clarifying the relations between science and theology and for guiding the influence of other sources/resources on theology.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE HERMENEUTICAL FRAMEWORKS OF FERNANDO CANALE  
AND FRITZ GUY: AND *PRIMA SCRIPTURA* AND  
THE SCIENCE-THEOLOGY RELATIONSHIP

A Thesis  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Masters of Arts

by  
Ryan Nicholas Claude Brousson

2017

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

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Martin Hanna, Ph.D., Advisor

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Woodrow Whidden, Ph.D.

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Date approved

## Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all the pastors and theologians, current and future, who strive to present the love of God to humanity. I pray that this material will be able to help them in their work of reflecting the light of God in this dark world.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.”

Psalms 119:105, NASB



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*PS*            *prima Scriptura*

*SS*            *sola Scriptura*

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I would first like to acknowledge God, who has given me the skills, knowledge, and wisdom to do this study. I pray that it will honour and glorify Him. I would also like to thank my family for the encouragement, support, and help they have given me throughout this process.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

### Background

The question of which hermeneutical framework should be used when approaching the Bible has been raging since the beginning of the Christian Church.<sup>1</sup> This is nowhere more prevalent than in the science and theology debate today. In the middle ages, Jan Hus redefined which sources were authoritative and this change in his hermeneutical framework put him at odds with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> Hus held to a *sola Scriptura* hermeneutical framework, replacing the authority of tradition and the church with that of Scripture (2016).<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the Reformation, reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin argued for a *sola Scriptura* hermeneutical framework. How *sola Scriptura* should be defined is often debated with many definitions present today.<sup>4</sup> The *sola Scriptura* debate was re-engaged by John Wesley in the eighteenth

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<sup>1</sup> See for example: Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, trans. Dominic J. Unger, Ancient Christian writers no. 55, 64-65 (New York, N.Y: Paulist Press ; Newman Press, 1992). John Peckham, “We Must Obey God Rather than Men: Jan Hus on the Authority of Scripture in Relation to Church and Conscience.,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 54, no. 1 (2016): 71–102. W. Stephen Gunter, ed., *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1997). Abd-El-Masih Istafanous, *Calvin’s Doctrine of Biblical Authority* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Peckham, “We Must Obey God Rather than Men.” 71.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. According to John Peckham, Hus held to a Tradition 1 *sola Scriptura* position as did Augustine and Luther. Ibid. 76. See chapter one for a definition of Tradition 1.

<sup>4</sup> Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically: Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1999), 137.

century. He proposed a definition of *sola Scriptura* that had Scripture as the normative authority, but at the same time allowed for three other sources: tradition, reason, and experience.<sup>5</sup> How these relate to each other has been, is, and will likely continue to be hotly debated.

The Protestant church has generally argued for a *sola Scriptura* hermeneutical framework. This framework is widely thought to be held by the general community and is considered the dominant framework today. However, though the community purports to support *sola Scriptura*, in the scholarly community there is some disagreement over *sola* and *prima Scriptura* and how they should be defined,<sup>6</sup> and in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition, the situation is the same.<sup>7</sup>

The science and theology dispute is closely related to the *sola* and *prima Scriptura* hermeneutical controversy and has resulted in clashes over how to interpret Genesis one and two.<sup>8</sup> There are many views on how Genesis one and two should be

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<sup>5</sup> Gunter, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral*. See also: United Methodist Church (U.S.), ed., *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 1980 (Nashville, TN: United Methodist, 1980). And Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason & Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Catholic Church, ed., *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, First Image books edition. (New York: Doubleday, 1995). N. Clayton Croy, *Prima Scriptura: An Introduction to New Testament Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011). John Peckham, *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> See Tom de Bruin, “Unlearning and Relearning Sola Scriptura: Satan as a Case Study,” *Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda: Proceedings of the European Theology-Teachers Convention* (n.d.), accessed January 26, 2017, [http://www.academia.edu/29458128/Unlearning\\_and\\_relearning\\_Sola\\_Scriptura\\_Satan\\_as\\_a\\_Case\\_Study](http://www.academia.edu/29458128/Unlearning_and_relearning_Sola_Scriptura_Satan_as_a_Case_Study). Timothy E. Crosby, “Why I Don’t Believe in Sola Scriptura,” *Ministry* (October 1987). Aleksandar S. Santrac, “The Sola Scriptura Principle in the Current Debate,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 24, no. 1 (2013): 107–126.

<sup>8</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues*, 1st HarperCollins rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1997). For a literal interpretation perspective see for example: Gerald A. Klingbeil, ed., *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, Creation in the Bible series (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015). For a non-literal interpretation

read, each stemming from a different interpretation of *sola* and *prima Scriptura*. These views can be grouped into two broad categories: literal and non-literal.

The literal view (generally) argues that the first two chapters of Genesis describe accurately how life was created on this planet. A recent, *ex nihilo* creation is as much historical fact as the reality that Jean Chrétien was Prime Minister of Canada in the 1990s. The literal view says that science and its methods should be subordinate to the literal interpretation of the Bible.<sup>9</sup>

The non-literal view (generally) argues that life, by natural processes, took long periods of time to develop through natural selection and the evolutionary process.<sup>10</sup> This position suggests that the biblical view of creation is not to be interpreted literally.

Salvation and the description of God's relation to humanity are the main purposes of Scripture. Science and theology, though interacting in some respects, describe different facets of reality.<sup>11</sup>

The issue of the hermeneutical framework debate concerns how many sources should be used in theology. Should science be a source? Should science be allowed to influence theology? If it is allowed then one could be using a *prima Scriptura* hermeneutical framework, if not, then *sola Scriptura* could be the framework that is

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perspective see for example: James L. Hayward et al., eds., *Creation Reconsidered: Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives* (Roseville, Calif: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> For example, see Fernando L. Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology: An Introduction to the Scientific and Theological Methods* (Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata Libertador San Martin, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Whether God directly started the process or God became involved with the process after it was started is debated as well.

<sup>11</sup> For one suggestion on this concept, see Stephen J. Gould, "Non-Overlapping Magisteria," *Natural History* 106 (March 1997): 16–22.

being used. The literal view, while including a wide range of views, tends to argue for science having less authority than Scripture, even if it is a source. The non-literal view will tend to allow science to have more authority and be a major source.

Two Adventist theologians, Fritz Guy and Fernando Canale, sit on opposite sides of the *sola* and *prima Scriptura* hermeneutical framework debate, as well as the debate over literal and non-literal views of Genesis one and two.

Guy advocates for a *prima Scriptura* hermeneutical framework, whereas Canale advocates for a *sola Scriptura* hermeneutical framework. In describing his *prima Scriptura* position, Guy writes, “scripture is not the *only* ingredient in Christian, including Adventist, interpretations of faith.”<sup>12</sup> He continues, “a more accurate motto is *prima scriptura*, ‘By scripture first of all.’”<sup>13</sup> He writes, “[T]he theological priority of Scripture must be maintained over every subsequent Christian theological tradition.”<sup>14</sup> Scripture is the primary source for the “interpretation of faith,” but other sources need to be considered when developing a faith structure.<sup>15</sup>

Along with this use of other sources to supplement Scripture, Guy relegates the Biblical text to the theological realm. So, though it is authoritative, it is only authoritative in relation to spiritual reality, not in relation to scientific reality. He writes, “our central question is this: in light of what we understand scientifically and theologically in the

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<sup>12</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 137. Italics in original.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Fritz Guy, “How Scripture Should Function in Theology,” *Ministry* 72 (March 1999): 18.

<sup>15</sup> He also suggests that the Wesleyan quadrilateral, or something similar, may be an even better option. Though the question could be asked, is the Wesleyan Quadrilateral truly *prima Scriptura*? Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 137.



twenty-first century, how shall we interpret Genesis 1?”<sup>16</sup> He answers this question by saying, “the Word of God in Scripture is utterly theological; its objective is salvation, not scientific knowledge.”<sup>17</sup>

The *prima Scriptura* hermeneutical framework that Guy uses, seems to only include those things that pertain to spiritual reality, anything outside this reality seems to be governed by *prima scientia*.<sup>18</sup> Thus, he suggests that evolutionary theory is a better explanation for our origins than a literal, historical explanation based on Genesis. He writes, with Brian Bull, “[the evidence] indicates that Earth is very, very old and that life upon it has been changing gradually for a long, long time (maybe billions of years).”<sup>19</sup>

For some, this movement away from the Bible to describe our origins is problematic.<sup>20</sup> However, if the Bible is purely theological, as Guy suggests, then this move would not cause any issues.<sup>21</sup> The Bible would explain our ultimate origins from God, but not the process of how life came about.

In contrast to Guy, Fernando Canale espouses a *sola Scriptura* hermeneutical framework. He defines *sola Scriptura* as the use of only Scripture to define theological

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<sup>16</sup> Fritz Guy, “Interpreting Genesis One in the Twenty-First Century,” *Spectrum* 31, no. 2 (2003): 5.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Guy focuses on the *prima Scriptura* aspect of his hermeneutical framework. He does not discuss *sola* or *tota Scriptura* apart from saying that *sola* is not a helpful hermeneutic from which to work. The focus is on each source’s intended use, theology on spiritual reality and science on material reality.

<sup>19</sup> Brian S. Bull and Fritz Guy, *God, Sky & Land: Genesis 1 as the Ancient Hebrews Heard It* (Roseville, CA: Adventist Forum, 2011), x.

<sup>20</sup> Fernando Canale for example.

<sup>21</sup> Though I believe that the Bible has more to say about the physical world than many tend to think.

knowledge, with Scripture having ultimate say in how science is to be used in theology. Theology sets the parameters for scientific study. Canale does not allow for multiple sources in theology,<sup>22</sup> The Bible is the only source of theological data. Thus, science does not determine any aspect of theology. The hermeneutical framework is a top-down structure with theology at the top and science at the bottom.

However, Canale does use *prima Scriptura* in his theology.<sup>23</sup> He distinguishes between *prima* based in a multiple source context, where *prima* takes priority over *sola*, and *prima* based in a *sola Scriptura* source context, where *sola* takes priority over *prima*.<sup>24</sup> In the *sola Scriptura* context, Canale suggests that the *prima Scriptura* principle is used to critique other areas of knowledge, after *sola* has been used to “discover” hermeneutical principles derived from Scripture itself.<sup>25</sup> Other sources of knowledge and hermeneutical frameworks are given secondary status to those obtained from the Bible. These non-Biblical frameworks are critiqued by the Scriptural principles of interpretation and anything that is in line with these principles is retained, while anything that is not is rejected.

Based on this *sola Scriptura* hermeneutical framework, Canale has taken the position that Genesis one and two should be interpreted as a literal description of how life

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<sup>22</sup> Fernando L. Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology: Scripture Replacing Tradition* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Lithothec, 2005), 23.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 24. Canale uses *sola*, *prima*, and *tota scriptura* in his hermeneutical framework.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 23-24.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 24.

came to be on this planet, and that modern evolutionary science does not give an accurate account of origins. He writes

If we depart from the *sola Scriptura* principle[,] there is no hope for theological unity in Adventism. If Adventism accepts evolution as the correct way for understanding the question of origins, it simultaneously exchanges one foundational macro-hermeneutical principle of biblical and theological interpretation for another.<sup>26</sup>

So, for Canale, both *sola Scriptura* and a non-evolutionary interpretation of our origins is essential for the Adventist church to have unity. *Sola Scriptura* and a literal interpretation of Genesis one and two are directly connected, and changing one, changes the other.

Moving away from the *sola Scriptura* hermeneutical framework opens the door for disunity and pluralism, as well as for evolutionary theory. Hence, for Canale, science and the scientific method must be subordinate to a Bible based hermeneutical framework.

### **The Problem**

The problem addressed in this research project may be articulated in the following questions. Of the hermeneutic frameworks as proposed by Fernando Canale (*sola Scriptura*) and Fritz Guy (*prima Scriptura*), which is the correct hermeneutical framework to guide the interaction between science and theology?<sup>27</sup> Which

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<sup>26</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 157.

<sup>27</sup> When discussing how science and belief interact, it is often referred to as the science and religion relationship or conflict. Here, however, I have chosen to replace the term religion with that of theology. The reasons for this are as follows. (1) Religion is a very broad term. It can include any type of religion, whether Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, spirit worship, or other (each of these has its own tradition and views of god, or lack thereof). (2) The academic use of the word religion has developed a large amount of baggage over the millennia that does not necessarily need to be brought into the conversation. (3) Theology, in the Christian context, is the study of the Bible. It is an academic discipline. Science is an academic discipline that studies nature. Religion, on the other hand is not often considered to be an academic study, though there are some who use it in such a fashion (religious studies for example). So, the terms theology and science, I submit are more academically suited to be conversation partners than religion and science. For a theologian who uses science-theology see: Martin F Hanna, "Science and Theology: Focusing the Complementary Lights of Jesus, Scripture, and Nature," *Journal of the Adventist Theological*

hermeneutical framework is the most appropriate for Christians, including Adventists, to use? Is it one or the other of the frameworks proposed by Canale and Guy, or is it a combination of the two? This thesis will attempt to give some answers to these questions.

### **The Purpose**

In light of the above problem, my purpose in this research project is to use Fernando Canale's and Fritz Guy's hermeneutical frameworks as source material to identify advantages and disadvantages of each framework and their usefulness for understanding the science-theology relationship.

### **Justification**

Our hermeneutical frameworks affect how we interpret Scripture and the world around us. Because these frameworks are so influential, though often not noticed, it is important to study their effects. This study is important because these two theologians have a major influence in the Seventh-day Adventist church and it behooves us to know where their respective ideas can lead, especially in the area of science and theology since this has become a major issue of contention in the church.

As far as I am aware, there has been no research that systematically compares, contrasts, and evaluates the hermeneutical frameworks of Canale and Guy in relation to science-theology relations. This issue also has implications for other theological areas, such as mission, outreach, and discipleship. These areas are influenced heavily by the hermeneutical frameworks that undergird them.

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*Society* 6, no. 2 (1995): 6–51. For a theologian who uses science-religion see: John M. Duffey, *Science and Religion: A Contemporary Perspective* (Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2013).

## Methodology

In a study of the *Sola Scriptura* (SS) and *Prima Scriptura* (PS) hermeneutical frameworks of Canale and Guy, there are many questions that can be asked. Questions such as: With regard to their respective interpretations of science-theology relations, is Canale faithful to his *sola Scriptura* hermeneutic? Is Guy faithful to his *prima Scriptura* hermeneutic? How have these frameworks affected their respective interpretations of the science-theology relationship? Which of these frameworks is more helpful for the Church in regard to understanding the science-theology relationship? Should these frameworks be used by the church as they are presented by Fernando Canale and Fritz Guy, or should they be modified in some way? And how have these frameworks this affected their respective interpretations of the science-theology relationship?

The first chapter will give some historical background to the *sola* and *prima Scriptura* and science-theology debates, describing the conflict that has raged between these hermeneutical frameworks throughout history. It will briefly look at Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, the Radical Reformation, and John Wesley.

Chapter two will outline Canale's position on *sola Scriptura* and his views on the science-theology relationship. Chapter three will outline Guy's position on *prima Scriptura* and his views on the science-theology relationship. Both of these chapters will focus on the effects of the *sola Scriptura* and *prima Scriptura* hermeneutical frameworks on Genesis one and two.

Chapter four will compare, contrast, and analyse the two hermeneutical frameworks employed by Canale and Guy, and based on this, will suggest a proposal for the use of a hermeneutical framework for approaching the science-theology relationship.

Chapter five will summarize the previous chapters and present my conclusions.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF *SOLA* AND *PRIMA SCRIPTURA* AND THE SCIENCE-THEOLOGY RELATIONSHIP

#### Introduction

The hermeneutical frameworks *SS* and *PS* have been debated throughout the history of the Christian Church. Some, like the Roman Catholic Church, argue for a redefinition of *SS*,<sup>1</sup> whereas the Protestant churches generally argue for the *SS* principle as passed down from the Reformers.<sup>2</sup>

Keith Mathison, along with others, has described a classification system for *SS* that consists of four traditions: Tradition 1, Tradition 2, Tradition 3, and Tradition 0.<sup>3</sup> Tradition 1 was the *SS* of the Magisterial Reformers and the early church. Scripture “was the sole source of revelation and the only doctrinal norm;” however, Scripture was “to be interpreted in and by the Church within the hermeneutical context of *regula fidei*.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Sungenis, *Not by Scripture Alone: A Catholic Critique of the Protestant Doctrine of Sola Scriptura* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Pub. Co, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Don Kistler, ed., *Sola Scriptura!: The Protestant Position on the Bible* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 269-296. See Craig D. Allert, “What Are We Trying to Conserve?: Evangelicalism and Sola Scriptura,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (October 2004): 327–348, and Anthony Lane, “Scripture, Tradition, and Church: An Historical Survey,” *Vox Evangelica* 9 (1975): 37–55, for a differing view.

<sup>4</sup> Keith A. Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2001), 151-153. *Regula fidei* is Latin for the “rule of faith.”

Tradition 2 was a two-source hermeneutic promoted by William of Ockham and held by the Roman Church starting around the 1400 century.<sup>5</sup> Here, Scripture and tradition held equal authority. Tradition 3, which developed after the Reformation, makes the living magisterium the final source of authority and determiner of interpretation instead of Scripture or tradition.<sup>6</sup> Tradition 0, started by the Radical Reformers, and passed on to modern evangelicalism through the Anabaptists and Puritans, puts sole authority in Scripture with no authority in the church, tradition, philosophy, or science.<sup>7</sup> This position could be called *solo Scriptura*.

This chapter will look at the development of the SS hermeneutical principle and its effect on the science-theology relationship from St. Augustine to John Wesley. The first section will focus on St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The next section will look at the Magisterial Reformers, Martin Luther and John Calvin. The third section of this chapter will focus on the Radical Reformation, specifically Andreas Rudolph Bodenstein von Karlstadt and Thomas Munzter, with the fourth and final section discussing the Anglican Church, John Wesley, and the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

### **St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas**

In this section, we will look at how Augustine and Thomas Aquinas viewed the *sola Scriptura* hermeneutical framework and how it affected the science-theology relationship. These theologians have had a major influence on Protestantism and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



Evangelical Christianity in regards to the SS principle. Though Augustine and Aquinas may not have used the term *sola Scriptura*, the concept that it describes is still present within their theologies.

Both Augustine and Aquinas argue for a high view of Scripture. Augustine comments in *De Civitate Dei* that the Scriptures were given to us by Christ through the prophets, Himself, and the apostles, and that the Scriptures have “preeminent authority.”<sup>8</sup>

Though, Augustine goes on to say, “and we put our trust in them [the Scriptures] concerning those matters of which it is not expedient for us to be ignorant but which we are incapable of knowing on our own.”<sup>9</sup> It seems Augustine is saying that the Scriptures are there for those things that we cannot know without them, but they do not necessarily apply to others areas of life, the sciences for instance. Yet, it seems that Augustine and Aquinas likely suggested less of a separation between science and theology than some modern-day scholars.

In his *On the Trinity*, Augustine comments on the three days of the Resurrection by saying,

But those reasons which I have here given, I have either gathered from the authority of the church, according to the tradition of our forefathers, or from the testimony of the divine Scriptures, or from the nature itself of numbers and of similitudes. No sober person will decide against reason, no Christian against the Scriptures, no peaceable person against the church.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Augustine, "The City of God," *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, trans. William Babcock, vol. 7 (Brooklyn, N.Y: New City Press, 1990), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 4, 6:10, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/130104.htm>. Accessed Mar. 3, 2017.

So, the church and tradition, along with nature (science), seem to influence theology along with Scripture. However, Augustine believed that the Church, tradition, and science conformed to Scripture.

Joseph Gallegos in arguing against *SS*, claims support from the church fathers. He says Christ entrusted the process of interpretation and dissemination of Scripture to the Catholic Church<sup>11</sup> (either Tradition 2 or 3). Gallegos supposedly gets support from Augustine, who remarks that he would not believe the Gospel except by the authority of the Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup> Augustine believed that the Church's tradition was in line with Scripture, thus he held to a Tradition 1 *SS* as his hermeneutical framework. Scripture was normative, but it was interpreted within the context of the Church. For some today this may be more along the lines of *PS*, but for Augustine and his contemporaries, this could be classified as a Tradition 1 *SS*.

Thomas Aquinas held a similar position to that of Augustine in regards to *SS*. Per Erik Persson points out that for the scholastics, of which Aquinas was one, Scripture was held in the highest esteem and that the practice of theology should be “solely and exclusively centred on Scripture.”<sup>13</sup> However, Thomas Weinandy comments that Aquinas

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph Gallegos, “What Did the Church Fathers Teach about Scripture, Tradition, and Church Authority,” in Sungenis, *Not by Scripture Alone.*, 457.

<sup>12</sup> Augustine, *Against the Fundamental Epistle of Manichaeus*, 5:6. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1405.htm>. Accessed Mar. 3, 2017. This passage from Augustine is contested, some argue that he is saying the church has final interpretative authority above Scripture, whereas others say Augustine was responding to a specific situation. John Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, argues that Augustine was responding to a specific situation. Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford L. Battles, The Library of Christian classics v. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 76-78.

<sup>13</sup> As quoted by Persson from H Felder. Per Erik Persson, *Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas; Translated [from the Swedish]* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 10. Hilarin Felder, *Geschichte der wissenschaftlichen studien im Franziskanerorden bis um die mitte des 13. jahrhunderts* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1904), accessed April 6, 2017, <http://archive.org/details/geschichtederwi00feldgoog>, 491.

interpreted the Bible in harmony with and within the range of the tradition of the church.<sup>14</sup> So, like Augustine, Aquinas held a Tradition 1 position on SS, though between these two there were likely slight differences.

For Aquinas, Scripture is the witness to revelation, but is itself not revelation. Later, this distinction possibly resulted in a shift to a Tradition 2 SS framework instead of the Tradition 1 that Augustine and the Reformers seemed to advocate. For Aquinas, revelation comes from God through the Holy Spirit and works with one's reason and mind.<sup>15</sup> The authority, according to Aquinas, lies with those who received the revelation from God.<sup>16</sup> This would mean that tradition, the wisdom passed on from the apostolic church was also authoritative to some degree, though for Aquinas, this did not conflict with his SS.

The literal interpretation of Scripture that Aquinas advocated was not limited to what the words strictly mean, as the term "literal" had a broader meaning for him. This meant that if an interpretation went against logic, history, or science, then the passage would need to be reinterpreted.<sup>17</sup> In such cases, external sources of knowledge had an influence. Commenting on whether the firmament separates water from water in his *Summa*, Aquinas remarks with a hint of what could be called historical criticism, by saying, "this theory can be shown to be false by solid reasons, it cannot be held to be the

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas G. Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating, and John Yocum, eds., *Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to His Biblical Commentaries* (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), ix.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 14-16.

<sup>16</sup> The prophets, apostles, and ultimately Christ. Aquinas, *ST*, 1, 1, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, I, 1, 10. See also: Weinandy, Keating, and Yocum, *Aquinas on Scripture*, 17.

sense of Holy Scripture. It should rather be considered that Moses was speaking to ignorant people.”<sup>18</sup> Aquinas seems to be implying that the literal meaning of the words used in Scripture do not mean what they say. The interpretation in this case should be influenced by natural philosophy (science) or tradition. So, though Scripture was normative, science and tradition had input into theology (Tradition 1).

Aquinas seems to focus on Scripture, giving it authority, but at the same time allowing for other sources to influence its interpretation as needed, a Tradition 1 model of SS. Though respecting the Church Fathers, he did feel free to correct them when he believed they did not conform to Scripture.<sup>19</sup> Though whether the correction made by Aquinas was truly scriptural could be debated.

This position was adopted partly from Augustine who, though keeping Scripture as primary, allowed other sources to influence his theology. Along with philosophy, both Augustine and Aquinas allowed science to influence their respective views. For a Tradition 0 SS, this would be a negative, but for a Tradition 1 SS, it was not.

Healy argues that Aquinas did not anticipate the Catholic Church’s focus on Scripture and tradition sharing authority.<sup>20</sup> Though it is possible to argue, that whether explicitly or implicitly, that Aquinas laid the groundwork for Scripture and tradition to share authority, especially with his reliance on other sources, neither of them went as far

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<sup>18</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, 68, 3. (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Complete English ed., vol. 1, 5 vols. (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1981).

<sup>19</sup> Weinandy, Keating, and Yocum, *Aquinas on Scripture*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 18.

as the Reformation Era, or the modern Catholic Church in giving authority to other sources.

Augustine and Aquinas held to a Tradition 1 *SS* hermeneutical framework which allowed science and tradition to influence theology and Scripture in describing the world we live in.

### **The Magisterial Reformers' View**

By the time of Martin Luther, who officially began the Protestant Reformation when he posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the University of Wittenberg's bulletin board,<sup>21</sup> the Roman Catholic Church had begun to move away from a focus on Scripture and to tradition as the final authority for faith and practice, from Tradition 1, through Tradition 2, to Tradition 3.<sup>22</sup> This position can be clearly seen in Sylvester Prierias' response to Luther's Ninety-Five Theses: "Whoever does not hold fast to the teachings of the Roman Church and of the Pope as the infallible rule of faith, from which even Holy

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<sup>21</sup> What is interesting about Luther's theses is that they do not explicitly discuss Biblical authority or challenge the authority of tradition or the Catholic Magisterium. Mark Noll writes, "while these Protestant emphases are all implicit, [for example: *SS* as hermeneutical framework, church tradition as at the most secondary] the explicit purpose of the Ninety-Five Theses was to examine only one particular problem." The problem was the selling of indulgences that the Roman Catholic Church leaders forced on the people. Mark A. Noll, ed., *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 26, 27.

<sup>22</sup> Though one could argue that Tradition 3 is not a true *SS* (because Scripture is not the normative authority), this terminology is used here because of Mathison's classification system.

Scripture draws its strength and authority, is a heretic.”<sup>23</sup> It is clear here that Scripture is not the primary authority. By this time, it had moved toward Tradition 3.<sup>24</sup>

Both Luther and John Calvin, who will be the focus of this section, argued against the above statement by Prierias.<sup>25</sup> They held to Tradition 1 like Augustine before them.<sup>26</sup> Scripture is the authority, but it is interpreted by the Church through the *regula fidei*. Luther was heavily influenced by Augustine,<sup>27</sup> in that he believed Scripture had final authority, but also that there were other sources to help Scripture. Luther allowed other sources to influence theology within his *SS* framework.<sup>28</sup> He used other sources to help Scripture, but these other sources did not take the normative and authoritative place of Scripture since they were subjected to it. Also, Luther used the church fathers, but they were not elevated above Scripture and Luther disagreed with them when he felt they did not interpret the Bible correctly.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *The Reformation: Roots and Ramifications* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 124, footnote 19. This may be a bold statement, however, in the *Dei Verbum*, it reads, “it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore[,] both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.” For the Catholic Church, tradition is considered to be at the very least equal with Scripture. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html). Accessed April 6, 2017. See also: Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 26-27. And Council of Trent, session IV, loc. cit.: Denzinger 783 (1501).

<sup>24</sup> See Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura*, 209ff. Cf. footnote 49.

<sup>25</sup> Though Calvin was not arguing directly with Prierias.

<sup>26</sup> See Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura*.

<sup>27</sup> Arthur Skevington Wood, *Captive to the Word; Martin Luther, Doctor of Sacred Scripture* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1969), 38-40.

<sup>28</sup> Norman Gulley comments on Luther’s *SS* by saying that “he applied the *sola Scriptura* principle christologically instead of canonically.” Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 548.

<sup>29</sup> Mark D. Thompson, *A Sure Ground on Which to Stand: The Relation of Authority and Interpretive Method in Luther’s Approach to Scripture*, Paternoster biblical and theological monographs

Luther also believed that reason and experience were important parts of theology. Again, Luther did not give these sources of knowledge any authority that would put them above the Bible.<sup>30</sup> Their sole purpose was to conform to and give support for Scripture. They only witnessed to the truth that is already contained within the Scripture. The other sources do not bring new light, but only reflect the light that is already present, with experience making what is said in Scripture real for believers.<sup>31</sup>

When Luther talked about reason, he likely meant, according to Mark Thompson, the process of properly explaining Scripture.<sup>32</sup> Even so, it had a subordinate position to Scripture. Luther did believe that reason is divinely given, but that it has been corrupted in this sinful world, thus it needs to be submitted to God and Scripture.<sup>33</sup> It can be assumed that science, or natural philosophy, had the same relationship to Scripture as reason, experience, tradition, and the church Fathers.

For John Calvin, like Luther, Scripture was authoritative above all other sources, and he wanted to draw a line between the authority of the church and the authority of Scripture.<sup>34</sup> Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* writes: “[God] has from the beginning maintained this plan for his church, so that besides these common proofs he also put forth his Word, which is a more direct and more certain mark whereby he is to be

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(Carlisle, Cumbria; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2004)., 252ff. See also: Wood, *Captive to the Word; Martin Luther, Doctor of Sacred Scripture*, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Thompson, *A Sure Ground on Which to Stand.*, 268-271.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 271-274.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 266.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 268-271.

<sup>34</sup> Istafanous, *Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority.*, xx.

recognized.”<sup>35</sup> Here Calvin hints at other sources of proof or knowledge (data/sources) for theology, but the main and best source is Scripture, and without it we fall into error.<sup>36</sup> The source of the authority of Scripture, what proves that Scripture is what it says it is, is the fact that God speaks through it, and because of this Scripture surpasses all other writings.<sup>37</sup> The prophets, and apostles did not claim to speak for themselves.<sup>38</sup> They pointed to the Source of the revelation which was beyond them.

Calvin had some strong remarks about the authority of the Catholic Church. He writes:

Thus [sic] these sacrilegious men, wishing to impose an unbridled tyranny under the cover of the church, do not care with what absurdities they ensnare themselves and others, provided they can force this one idea upon the simple-minded: that the church has authority in all things.<sup>39</sup>

The church was important, but it was not to take the place of determining the rule of faith and practice. He argued that the church should be built on Scripture and is to approve of and lift up the authority of God’s Word.<sup>40</sup> Calvin also held similar beliefs in regard to the church Fathers. The Fathers wrote some good things, but they also wrote error.<sup>41</sup> The fact that they are fallible means they cannot be authoritative in the same way Scripture is

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<sup>35</sup> The Word of God is equivalent to Scripture. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion.*, 70-71.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 72-73.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>39</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion.*, 74.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>41</sup> Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1541 French Edition*, trans. Elsie Anne McKee (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 12.



authoritative, their authority is only in relation to their conformity to Scripture. Tradition is the same, and should be regarded as less authoritative than Scripture.<sup>42</sup> In agreement with Luther, Calvin supports a Tradition 1 SS hermeneutical framework instead of a Tradition 2, 3, or 0.

In regard to general and special revelation (Nature and Scripture), Calvin says that Scripture reveals more than nature does. They both reveal truth about God, but Scripture reveals more about who He is and what He has done in redeeming the fallen world.<sup>43</sup> This greater explanatory power of special revelation, made it more authoritative. Calvin also disparaged the philosophers (who often dealt with nature and theology) and felt they were not helpful when interpreting Scripture.<sup>44</sup> It seems science should be taken into consideration when doing theology, but it should never take the place of Scripture.

Luther and Calvin, though believing Scripture had final authority in theology, allowed other sources, like science, tradition, and philosophy, to have an influence in the process of interpretation. Though other sources influenced interpretation, they were not allowed to take the place of Scripture. Scripture had the final and normative authority. This was a Tradition 1 hermeneutical framework.

### **The Radical Reformation's View**

During the time of the Magisterial Reformers, there was a movement that wanted to make the reformation more far reaching, both in theology and society. They felt that

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 73-74.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 65-66.

the Reformers did not extend the Reformation far enough in their reform of the Church, and wanted to see reform in all areas of society.<sup>45</sup> The movement is often called the Radical Reformation.<sup>46</sup> Two influential radical reformers will be looked at here: Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt and Thomas Muntzer. Both of these reformers were contemporaries of Luther.

In talking generally about the radical reformers, Alister McGrath says,

The magisterial Reformers adopted a positive approach to tradition, particularly the *testimonia partum*, whereas the radicals adopted a generally negative approach. To most of the radicals, the fathers were an irrelevance: every individual had the unfettered right to interpret scripture in whatever manner seemed right to him or her.<sup>47</sup>

According to Ronald Sider, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, who worked with Luther at Wittenberg, agreed with Luther on some points relating to authority, but he initially tried to take a more moderate position when it came to the Catholic Church's authority. Early in his career as a reformer, Karlstadt thought that Scripture had divine authority "but the church also certifies and approves it."<sup>48</sup> Scripture is above the Pope, but the Pope did not necessarily err. He wanted to give Scripture ultimate authority without accusing the Pope and the Bishops of error and falsehood.<sup>49</sup> Unlike some of the

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<sup>45</sup> Michael G. Baylor, ed., *The Radical Reformation*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xi-xvii.

<sup>46</sup> There was little that held these reformers together apart from the idea that the Magisterial Reformers did not make a complete break with Rome.

<sup>47</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine: A Study in the Foundations of Doctrinal Criticism* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 118. See also: Peter Fraenkel, *Testimonia Patrum; the Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melancthon*, Travaux d'humanisme et renaissance, 46 (Genève: E. Droz, 1961), 77-82.

<sup>48</sup> Ronald J. Sider, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt: The Development of His Thought, 1517-1525*, Studies in medieval and Reformation thought v. 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 54.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 53.

other Reformers, he did this by defining the literal sense of Scripture narrowly. According to Sider, this allowed for a doctor of theology to be considered as above the Pope, Church, and councils with his Scriptural interpretation if he could prove his interpretation from the literal sense without logical deductions and inferences.<sup>50</sup> The literal sense would have to be very clear with no ambiguities. Sider also comments that Karlstadt felt the scholastic practice of combining Aristotle and Scripture led to misinterpretations.<sup>51</sup> This suggests that Karlstadt believed philosophy should not have a place in theology.

After August of 1520, Karlstadt opted for the Tradition 1 SS principle like his colleague Luther. Though eventually his Tradition 1 SS became a Tradition 0 SS. He made this switch because he no longer felt that Scripture and the Catholic Church were in harmony.<sup>52</sup> He thought Scripture should be the sole source for faith and practice. Though Scripture should be the sole source, Karlstadt did not completely reject the church, but the church only had a supporting role, along with the church fathers. They witnessed to the authority that the Bible already possessed.<sup>53</sup> However, these supporting roles seem to gradually diminish over time.

Interestingly, Karlstadt held that Scripture should be compared with Scripture, that it is its own interpreter. This seems to be a major component of the SS principle

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 54. This was unlikely to happen however since the Church has not erred.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 95-97, passim. See also, Werner O. Packull and Geoffrey Dipple, eds., *Radical Reformation Studies: Essays Presented to James M. Stayer*, St. Andrews studies in Reformation history (Aldershot, Hants, England; Brookfield, Vt: Ashgate, 1999), 116.

promoted by the Reformers. Karlstadt's position is in opposition to the Catholic thinking that the Church is the interpreter of Scripture.<sup>54</sup> Along with this belief, Karlstadt also believed, according to Sider, that the individual, and not just the clergy, had the right to read and interpret the Bible for themselves.<sup>55</sup> They did not need the ordained clergy to qualify their interpretation of Scripture. For Karlstadt, *SS* is the correct hermeneutical framework, which by this point is closer to Tradition 0 than Tradition 1. Also, the Holy Spirit speaks through Scripture and Scripture is compared with Scripture,<sup>56</sup> science, tradition, and philosophy should not be used in the interpretation process.<sup>57</sup>

Thomas Muntzer held similar, yet in some respects different, views to those of Karlstadt. Muntzer believed, like Karlstadt, that Scripture was the only source of theology. Unlike Karlstadt, in the preface to his translation of Muntzer, Michael Baylor comments: "a basic feature of his thought was that authentic faith is not dependent on scriptural revelation. Nevertheless, he prized Scripture for the evidence it provided about God's dealings with the elect."<sup>58</sup> Scripture, though thought of in a slightly different manner than Karlstadt, still had the normative place in the authority structure.

In his *Sermon to the Princes*, Muntzer writes, "they [those who support the church] assert that the Christian church cannot err. But to the contrary, in order to guard

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<sup>54</sup> Sider, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt.*, 91

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>58</sup> Michael G. Baylor, "Preface" in *Revelation and Revolution: Basic Writings of Thomas Muntzer*, trans. Michael G. Baylor (Bethlehem: London; Cranbury, NJ: Lehigh University Press; Associated University Presses, 1993), 11.

against error the church should be constantly built on the word of God and thus be kept free from error.”<sup>59</sup> This idea was contrary to the standard thinking of the day, which argued that the church could not err. Muntzer’s view is clearly within the Tradition 0 category.

Interestingly, in his *Special Exposure of False Faith*, Muntzer argued that Christendom supported the authority of Scripture with the tradition of the church. The church accepted the books and gave witness to their authority. This is the view that Luther promoted. So Muntzer, at least to begin with, held to Tradition 1 like Luther and Augustine.

Muntzer sought to base the authority of Scripture in the Holy Spirit.<sup>60</sup> He seems to be saying that the church of his day was focusing on Scripture without the input of the Holy Spirit. This is also argued in his *The Prague Protest*.<sup>61</sup> He charged Luther with saying that one can interpret Scripture properly on one’s own, without guidance from the Holy Spirit. This, Muntzer argued, is not possible.<sup>62</sup> The only way to correctly interpret Scripture is with the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Along with Karlstadt, Muntzer also believed that Scripture should be compared with Scripture within its context, and not with other writings, traditions, or the proof-text method.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Muntzer, *Revelation and Revolution*, 99.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 119-121.

<sup>61</sup> Baylor, *The Radical Reformation*, 1-5.

<sup>62</sup> Müntzer, *Revelation and Revolution*., 131.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 115.

Alister McGrath comments that Muntzer, and those who believed similarly, thought of the authority of the past, or tradition, as irrelevant at its best, but more accurately “a burden perpetuating the unjust social conditions of the present.”<sup>64</sup> There was no place for tradition with the Radical Reformers, at least in their later thinking and each individual or community was free to interpret Scripture without reference to tradition and the church structure.<sup>65</sup>

For the Radical Reformers, a complete rejection of anything but Scripture was needed for true reform to take place. Tradition, science, reason, the church, and anything else, was not sufficient to properly interpret the Word of God. They held to SS and defined it in such a way that Scripture alone (illuminated by the Spirit) was involved in the interpretative process (Tradition 0).

### **The Wesleyans and Their View**

Wesley, as Stephen Gunter comments, was an Anglican priest, and as a result, his theology was influenced by, and reflected, this tradition.<sup>66</sup> This tradition respected the authority of the Bible, while at the same time upholding the Church fathers and tradition. The Anglican Church, along with Wesley, held Tradition 1 with Luther and Calvin. John Jewel, who was the Bishop of Salisbury and lived from 1522 to 1571, argued that the difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church was the “fundamental authority of Scripture for doctrine and practice” that the Anglican Church

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<sup>64</sup> McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine*, 131.

<sup>65</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 100.

<sup>66</sup> W. Stephen Gunter, ed., *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1997), 17.

held.<sup>67</sup> However, one concern the Anglican Bishops had, and Wesley later on, related to personal interpretations overshadowing the Church's commonly held interpretations and the misuse of the Bible.<sup>68</sup> They rejected Tradition 0 because Jewel and others felt that their theological structure was solidly based on Scripture, and to maintain this structure they appealed to tradition, specifically the tradition of the first five centuries of the Christian church.<sup>69</sup> However, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church of the Elizabethan Era, did not place tradition above the Bible; instead tradition was the servant of Scripture.<sup>70</sup> Bishop Latimer, who lived from 1487-1555 and was the Bishop of Worcester, wrote,

These doctors, we have great cause to thank God for them, but I would not have them always be allowed. They have handled many points of our faith very gladly, and we have a great stay in them in many things ...; but yet I would not have men sworn to them, and so addict as to take hand over head whatsoever they say.<sup>71</sup>

In commenting on the quote above, Gunter says that in hind sight “the Anglicans utilized from tradition that which was not explicitly ruled out by Scripture.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 31.

<sup>68</sup> This would have been in response to the Radical Reformation and its offshoots: The Puritans and Anabaptists for example.

<sup>69</sup> Gunter, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral.*, 32.

<sup>70</sup> Fernando Canale has pointed out that the Christian church has espoused fidelity to Scripture, but in practice they have gone after other sources. In the discussion of Wesley and Anglicanism, one could argue that though they in theory gave final authority to Scripture alone, they in practice gave it to tradition. This could be the case. However, another question remains, which may find its roots in the Adventist idea of Present Truth: Were they living up to the truth or light that they had? It may be answered that, though they may not have always had correct doctrine, they had correct placement of authority, in relation to the light they had.

<sup>71</sup> Bishop Latimer, *Sermons*, 1:218.

<sup>72</sup> Gunter, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral*, 34.

*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* comments on their doctrinal heritage by saying, “Their preaching and teaching were grounded in Scripture, informed by Christian tradition, enlivened in experience, and tested by reason.”<sup>73</sup> For the Methodists then, it seems that Scripture is the grounding for theological teaching, but tradition, experience, and reason have a place in the hermeneutical framework to nuance and support what Scripture says. This four-fold structure would be similar to Tradition 1.

Even though Wesley had the four-fold structure, he still upheld Scripture as normative. He writes in the Preface to his *Sermons*, “Let me be *homo unius libri*.”<sup>74</sup> A man of one Book, Wesley wanted to be focused on the Bible. Though he did have other sources, his focus was on Scripture.

Wesley defined his view of SS as Scripture having authority, but at the same time not necessarily discounting other sources of knowledge. This can be seen in his so-called quadrilateral.<sup>75</sup> This position is similar to the Magisterial Reformers. Though these sources only have authority in so far as they conform to Scripture.<sup>76</sup>

Wesley used the resources of his time to get the best perspective on the biblical text.<sup>77</sup> As such, Wesley read the Bible comparatively with its historical and cultural

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<sup>73</sup> United Methodist Church (U.S.), ed., *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 2012 (Nashville, TN: United Methodist, 2012), 45.

<sup>74</sup> John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Frank Baker and Albert Cook Outler, Oxford ed., vol. 1, 20 vols. (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1980), 1:105. See also “On God’s Vineyard,” John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Frank Baker and Albert Cook Outler, Oxford ed., vol. 3, 20 vols. (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1980), 3:504.

<sup>75</sup> The Wesleyan Quadrilateral consists of Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience.

<sup>76</sup> United Methodist Church (U.S.), ed., *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 2012, 8.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 4-6. For example, lexicons and dictionaries. The main translation of the Bible at that time was the King James Version. Though Wesley used this version extensively, he did not use it exclusively.



context in mind.<sup>78</sup> Wesley also used biblical criticism and other sources (such as nature, tradition, and other writers) to bolster his position, without removing final, normative authority from Scripture.<sup>79</sup> Since Wesley and the Anglican Church argued that Scripture only deals with the spiritual realm of reality, other sources were needed to understand the rest of reality.

This practice of using academic sources to shed light on the Biblical text is at times criticised by those who hold to a Tradition 0 SS hermeneutical framework. They argue that these sources are not needed to help one understand the text, and that they interfere with what the Holy Spirit has to say. The Radical Reformers and their offshoots argued in this way.

In regards to the concept of Scripture alone, Randy Maddox makes the interesting comment, “for most Protestants [Scripture alone] ... did not mean rejecting the value of consulting some communally shared sense of central and unifying themes in Scripture when trying to interpret particular passages.”<sup>80</sup> Thus, using tradition and other sources was not mutually exclusive with the SS principle.<sup>81</sup> This is interesting for our current discussion.

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He used other English translations, as well as German and French translations. He also used the Greek and Hebrew, in some cases modifying the *Textus Receptus* manuscript.

<sup>78</sup> Green, *Wesley, Wesleyans, and Reading Bible as Scripture.*, 7-8.

<sup>79</sup> “Thoughts Upon Methodism” “The Bible is the whole and sole rule both of Christian faith and practice.”

<sup>80</sup> Maddox, “John Wesley,” 15.

<sup>81</sup> Wesley held to this view and believed, along with the Enlightenment or Age of Reason, that “any claim for revealed truth must be held accountable to human reason and experience.” Robert W. Wall, “Reading Scripture, the Literal Sense, and the Analogy of Faith” in *Wesley, Wesleyans, and Reading Bible as Scripture*, 36.

Thus, for Wesley and the Anglican Church, holding to a Tradition 1, Scripture was the rule of faith and practice, but tradition, science, and reason played a part in explaining and supporting Scripture and theology.

### **Summary**

Augustine and Aquinas held Scripture above all the other sources. They promoted a Tradition 1 SS hermeneutical framework. They allowed other sources, science and tradition, to influence their theology, but they did not allow them to take the normative role as the rule of faith and practice. Later the Catholic Church allowed tradition and Scripture to share authority, and thus held a Tradition 2 position.<sup>82</sup>

After the Reformation, the Catholic Church shifted towards Tradition 3 which placed the Church as final authority over the Bible. The Magisterial Reformers rebelled against Tradition 2 and 3 and argued for the Tradition 1 position. Scripture has final authority, but tradition is helpful and gives a framework for Bible interpretation. In response to this, the Catholic Church argued that the Magisterium had final authority over Scripture and tradition. This is the current position of the Roman Church.

The Radical Reformers argued for Tradition 0. They argued that only Scripture should have any authority in theology and that Scripture was the only source of theological data and interpretation.

For Augustine and Aquinas, as well as Luther and Calvin, science had an important part to play in describing reality, but it did not take the place of Scripture. Scripture determined the overall outcome of the science-theology relationship. The

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<sup>82</sup> See Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura*.

Radical Reformers, especially Karlstadt and Muntzer, argued differently. They argued that science and tradition should not have any place in theology. Only Scripture should be allowed as data. Wesley, with his quadrilateral, held a position similar to the Magisterial Reformers, Augustine, and Aquinas. Science had an important part to play in theology, but it did not take the normative place of Scripture.

In the next chapter, I will present Fernando Canale and his Tradition 0 SS hermeneutical framework.

## CHAPTER 3

### FERNANDO CANALE: *SOLA SCRIPTURA*, SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

The previous chapter looked at the history of the *SS* framework and its connection to the science-theology relationship with Christendom. This chapter will focus on Fernando Canale's interpretation of the *SS* hermeneutical framework and how he thinks it affects the science and theology relationship.

#### **The *Sola Scriptura* Hermeneutical Framework**

In his *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, Canale says that our scientific, philosophical, and theological knowledge always depends on the presuppositions we hold when interpreting the data.<sup>1</sup> As a result, it is important to be conscious of our presuppositions in order to understand and more accurately interpret the data. Canale argues that the data with which one is working has a major influence on the outcome of the interpretation.<sup>2</sup> He writes, "Hermeneutical principles and goals depend on the sources of data that theologians choose to base their theologies upon."<sup>3</sup> Because the source

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<sup>1</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>3</sup> Canale, "Sola Scriptura and Hermeneutics.", 179.

determines the outcome, Canale asserts that in order to be biblical, one must adopt a *SS* hermeneutical framework.

Canale identifies his presupposition as a Tradition 0 *SS*.<sup>5</sup> He defines *SS* as the use of Scripture alone for theological data and the principles of interpretation.<sup>6</sup> His position may be summarized in the slogan: The Bible and the Bible only. In communicating to me, he wrote,

Sola is solo or Tradition 0 in the categories of Mathison. In other words, in doing theology we do not need to use any other revelation from God as source or as presupposition for interpretation as Tradition 1 affirms. This does not mean there is no other information that [is] biblical.<sup>7</sup>

Scripture is the only revelation for theology.

According to Canale, this single-source hermeneutic is not used by other Christian theologies and he argues that they use a multiple-sources hermeneutic.<sup>8</sup> In a Tradition 0 framework, sources of knowledge other than Scripture (such as science, philosophy, tradition, and culture) are not allowed to have a major influence when interpreting the Bible. The principles of interpretation should be derived directly from Scripture and not from any other source. Canale says, “*sola Scriptura* means that all other sources of knowledge must be tested by this unerring standard,”<sup>9</sup> with the other sources being critiqued by the biblical Source.

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<sup>4</sup> Fernando Canale, e-mail message to author, March 17, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter one, “Introduction” for a discussion of Mathison’s categories.

<sup>6</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Canale, e-mail message to author, March 17, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 26. And even some Adventists, prominent among them would be Fritz Guy.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 198.

A multiple-sources hermeneutic results, according to Canale, in Christian theology being in a constant state of flux. In referring to ministry, Canale suggests, “Christian theology has always adapted to the philosophy, science, and culture of the day. Thus, it is not surprising that Christians will continue to do the same when facing secularism and postmodernity.”<sup>10</sup> Because philosophy, science, and culture are supposedly always changing, when theology bases its hermeneutic on these sources, it will be forced to change as well. This change in theological data instigated by the other sources would result in a change of the “hermeneutical conditions of theology.”<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere Canale writes, “Christian thought relies on philosophy for its methodology, any change in philosophical views demand a change in the teachings of the church.”<sup>12</sup> A single source hermeneutical framework like SS does not have this problem.<sup>13</sup> When science and philosophy change, scriptural interpretation does not change because the hermeneutical principles are not based on these other sources.

To combat this forced change, Canale argues that Adventist theology<sup>14</sup> should depend on the “*sola-tota-prima Scriptura* principle (the Scripture only, in all its parts, and as the first principle of interpretation of natural revelation and the human

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<sup>10</sup> Fernando L. Canale, “From Vision to System: Finishing the Task of Adventist Theology: Part 1: Historical Review,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 15, no. 2 (2004): 5–39. 30. See note 103.

<sup>11</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 105.

<sup>12</sup> Fernando L. Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology: A Hermeneutical Study of the Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2005)., 140.

<sup>13</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 105.

<sup>14</sup> Canale believes that the SS principle is important because Adventist scholars and pastors feel comfortable using Protestant and Evangelical theology and ministerial practices assuming that they are following the SS principle when they are not. Canale, “Sola Scriptura and Hermeneutics,” 192.

sciences).”<sup>15</sup> The *prima* and *tota Scriptura* principles are subordinate to the *SS* principle.

He describes *PS*, in connection with *SS*, in the following way:

Under the *sola scriptura* principle, the *prima scriptura* procedure means that theologians give hermeneutical and interpretive priority to the truth of Scripture over the truths we arrive at using philosophical and scientific methodologies. Moreover, we criticize and understand the latter in light of the former.<sup>16</sup>

Scripture is the source that critiques all other sources of knowledge. In “The Eclipse of Scripture,” Canale more clearly describes the relationship between *sola* and *prima*. He writes,

*Sola* (Scripture only) means that we recognize Scripture as the only specific cognitive revelation from God on which all our beliefs should be grounded and tested. *Tota* (Scripture as an indivisible whole) means Adventists see Old and New Testaments as an indivisible whole of divine revelation they need to understand God. Finally, *Prima* (Scripture first) means that the principles and doctrines we discover in the whole Scripture will be applied as hermeneutical presuppositions to judge human philosophy, science, politics, morals, worldviews, religions, and actions.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the hermeneutical principles for the other sources are determined and derived from Scripture, which has the normative role in theology.

Canale argues that the “leading projects of Christian theology” use tradition as the light or lens (the source of the hermeneutical principles) on which Scripture is viewed.<sup>18</sup>

The cause of this, according to Canale, is that the Magisterial Reformers did not apply the *SS* principle completely in their reformation work.<sup>19</sup> This resulted in the theological

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>16</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Fernando L. Canale, “The Eclipse of Scripture and the Protestantization of the Adventist Mind: Part 1: The Assumed Compatibility of Adventism with Evangelical Theology and Ministerial Practices,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 21, no. 1–2 (2010): 133–165, n29 144.

<sup>18</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 27.

<sup>19</sup> Canale, “Sola Scriptura and Hermeneutics,” 181–183.

descendants of the Reformers practicing a multi-source hermeneutic instead of single-source hermeneutic. He seems to agree with the Radical Reformers' criticism of the Magisterial Reformers in this regard, which is contrary to the generally held view that the Reformers, and Protestant and Evangelical Christianity today (including John Wesley), applied the *SS* hermeneutical framework correctly.<sup>20</sup>

Canale argues that biblical thinking is fundamentally different from Christian tradition because of the latter's infusion of Greek metaphysics by the Church Fathers.<sup>21</sup> Because Augustine<sup>22</sup> used Platonic philosophy<sup>23</sup> (the timelessness of God) to develop his theology (see chapter one), thus creating the methodology that Christianity followed. Canale writes, "a historical understanding of God's mediation through Jesus Christ in created history as decided by God before the creation of the world is impossible."<sup>24</sup>

Thus, for Canale, a *SS* hermeneutic is essential for theology to remain true to Scripture. A removal of the Platonic influences in Christian theology is required for science and theology to truly be able to dialogue effectively. Canale writes,

Scripture directly opposes Platonic cosmology by not accepting the generalized notion that God and religion belong to a timeless, spaceless realm. True debate

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 180, 188. Canale does mention that the average person in the trenches of the Protestant and Evangelical denominations gravitates toward *SS*, at least in his/her thinking; the theologians and pastors on the other hand, have begun to use multiple sources within their theologies. Ibid, 197.

<sup>21</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 213.

<sup>22</sup> Augustine was not the first or only church father to use Greek philosophy in his theology. See for example Origen.

<sup>23</sup> In *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, Canale comments that Protestant Christianity has rejected philosophy only when it contradicts the doctrine of Justification by Faith. Though it may not be a source, it is still a tool in the theologian's toolbox. Fernando L. Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 53.

<sup>24</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 174.



between evolution and creation can only take place in such a context if we understand both theories refer to the same field of reality, the temporal-spatial realm of creation.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, according to Canale, for any progress to be made in the realm of theology requires a rejection of non-biblical principles.

Though Canale argues that Scripture should be the only source or data for theology, he does not discount tradition, or science, completely. He says we must “engage tradition critically to determine whether it contributes to understanding scriptural revelation in light of Scripture.”<sup>26</sup> Tradition can be helpful and we can learn from it, but we need to be suspicious of it, and be willing to deconstruct it if and when the need arises.<sup>27</sup>

Canale proposes that to reject non-biblical principles and to determine the usefulness of the other sources, deconstruction is the procedure that is to be used.<sup>28</sup> This process gives sole hermeneutical authority to Scripture. Postmodernism,<sup>29</sup> which brought

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<sup>25</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*., 34.

<sup>26</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 28.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Canale argues that the Reformers did not go far enough in their deconstruction of Catholic theology and tradition. As a result, they “precipitated the modernist approach to theology” and now the need to “adjust the gospel to postmodern culture.” Fernando L. Canale, “Deconstructing Evangelical Theology?” 44, no. 1, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* (2006): 95–130, 106-107.

<sup>29</sup> Canale argues, interestingly, that postmodernity, which “has made clear that there are no universal principles on which the rational search for truth can be grounded,” and which Christianity has generally tried to avoid or fight against, is in actuality beneficial to the SS hermeneutical framework. It has allowed for, and advanced the deconstruction of the classical and modern hermeneutical frameworks based on God’s timelessness, and has made room for a temporal hermeneutical framework based in Scripture. Canale contends that our theology on revelation-inspiration, science and theology, and other concepts need to be sourced in Scripture. Fernando L. Canale, “Evolution, Theology, and Method. Part 1: Outline and Limits of Scientific Methodology,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41, no. 1 (2003), 95; Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 244.

about the concept of deconstruction, both deconstructive and constructive,<sup>30</sup> works to re-evaluate classical, modern, and even postmodern thinking. Deconstruction not only needs to deconstruct other sources of theology, but it also needs to construct a biblically based interpretation.<sup>31</sup> Canale writes, “understood as a whole and in its parts, sola Scriptura is the basis for our critical retrieval of Christian tradition both Adventist and Non-Adventist. This we do through the methodology of deconstruction.”<sup>32</sup>

He says, “deconstruction is always necessary to understand revealed truths.”<sup>33</sup> He also says “deconstruction is a critical reading of interpretative and systematic traditions,” the ground of which is Scripture.<sup>34</sup> However, “deconstruction, then, works not as a criticism of the Bible from postmodern assumptions, but as a criticism of classical, modern, and postmodern theological constructions from the Bible.”<sup>35</sup> The Bible is not deconstructed, but is instead the foundation on which everything else is deconstructed.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See David Ray Griffin, *God and Religion in the Postmodern World: Essays in Postmodern Theology*, SUNY series in constructive postmodern thought (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), x-xi, 8, 19-20, 30, 45. And David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith, *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, SUNY series in constructive postmodern thought (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1989), xii-xiii. And Gor Madoyan, *Jacques Derrida. Full Documentary Film*, n.d., accessed April 13, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_ujk4vld9A&t=87s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_ujk4vld9A&t=87s).

<sup>31</sup> Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 6-7.

<sup>32</sup> Canale, e-mail message to author, March 17, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Canale, Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 104, does say that “deconstruction as critical method should not be confused or identified with deconstructionism.” “Deconstruction is the constructive attempt to talk about God from within the context of our secular relativistic postmodern culture and in a non[-]theological form” 105. Deconstructionism results in a theology that is indistinguishable from secular society. Canale, “Deconstructing Evangelical Theology?”, 95.

<sup>34</sup> Canale, “Deconstructing Evangelical Theology?”, 118.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 124. He continues, “deconstruction starts by shifting the macro-hermeneutical horizon from philosophical timelessness to Scripture’s temporality.”

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 126-127.

This deconstruction is done before other sources of knowledge are allowed to influence theology or be used as theological tools. SS uses deconstruction to get at the root of theological constructs to see if they are biblical in nature; if they are, then they are retained in the framework.<sup>37</sup>

Canale contends that tradition falls outside of revelation (Scripture) where God has revealed and made Himself known. Tradition is where God's revelation has been interpreted, and thus deals with hermeneutics.<sup>38</sup> However, tradition is not where "hermeneutical principles are criticized and defined."<sup>39</sup> This is the exclusive role of Scripture. "The *sola Scriptura* principle makes necessary a theological criticism of the hermeneutical principles operative in Christian theology."<sup>40</sup> The same can be said for science, theological systems, and philosophy.

In regard to philosophy, Canale argues that, though theology and philosophy investigate some of the same issues (God and reality for example), nonetheless, philosophy should be separate from theology; theology needs to use interpretative principles derived from Scripture.<sup>41</sup> Significantly, he says that all theologians, whether implicitly or explicitly, use philosophical concepts in their theology. He writes,

These assumptions are necessary for the proper operation of all theological disciplines and their interdisciplinary relations. The question is not whether we have to use philosophical assumptions in theology, but how we are going to interpret them.

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<sup>37</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 29.

<sup>38</sup> Fernando L. Canale, "Interdisciplinary Methods in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 43, no. 3 (January 2001), 385.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 55.

More specifically, from what source we are going to derive our interpretation of the hermeneutical principles of Christian theology.<sup>42</sup>

So, philosophy that follows the biblical hermeneutical principle of *SS* and conforms to the critique and deconstruction from the Bible is acceptable as a tool to be used by theology. However, it (philosophy) should never be used as the source of theology.

Canale writes that when the “hermeneutical principle of theology is ascribed to philosophy and science, the application of the *sola Scriptura* principle becomes impossible.”<sup>43</sup> Philosophy, according to Canale, has generally been allowed to decide the content of the hermeneutical principle, which has thus shaped both science and theology. When philosophy or science governs the hermeneutical principles, *SS* is not possible.<sup>44</sup> Philosophy and science are not God’s Special Revelation, and thus they cannot be the sources of the hermeneutical principles for theology. Canale argues, “Scripture holds a cognitive privilege that entitles it to become the authoritative source of theological data.”<sup>45</sup>

When discussing the source of theology (Scripture) and other sources of information and knowledge,<sup>46</sup> Canale makes a distinction between Scripture as the source of theology and the other sources, or what he calls resources. He says,

Science and tradition are resources adjusted to the intelligibility and conditions dictated by the source of theology, namely, Scripture. The difference between source

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<sup>42</sup> Fernando L. Canale, “From Vision to System: Finishing the Task of Adventist Theology: Part 3: Sanctuary and Hermeneutics,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 2 (2006), 38.

<sup>43</sup> Canale, “Interdisciplinary Methods in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal.”

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 384. He continues, “Scripture becomes the source from which not only Christian doctrines but also the hermeneutical principles for their interpretation should be determined.”

<sup>46</sup> Science, tradition, philosophy, experience, to name a few.

and resource is that the former is generated by divine revelation, while the latter springs from human imagination. As resources originate in human understanding and imagination, they may contribute to theological discourse only after the *sola-tota-prima Scriptura* principle is applied.<sup>47</sup>

These resources of knowledge are needed and important, but they should not determine the hermeneutical presuppositions that drive theology. Canale writes,

In other words, we do not build our understanding of God and his action on the basis of information we find in the annals of secular history. But since biblical history took place in human history, human history is the immediate context of Divine activity and revelation. But, following Ellen White, neither Church councils ([n]on-Adventist or Adventists [sic]) or the opinion of men (neither lay or theologians, ignorant or scholars, Adventists or non-Adventists[]) are to be evidences (proofs, sources) on which we understand divine revelation and construct the doctrines of the Church. We do read the opinion[s] of men but only with the purpose to understand [the] continuity or discontinuity with Biblical revelation (Christian theology) throughout the centuries. We approach the History of Philosophy[,] Science[,] and Christian Theology critically from the perspective of Scripture[,] [m]ore precisely, from the perspective of a full[y] developed Christian Biblical Systematic Theology.<sup>48</sup>

The resources should be used as tools when they are in-line with Scripture. They are to submit to the hermeneutical presuppositions derived from Scripture.

Unlike what some might think, Canale argues that the SS hermeneutical framework is not a hermeneutic that just reads the text of Scripture. The SS principle, Canale contends, goes deeper than a cursory reading of the Bible. The SS principle contains the hermeneutical principles and methodologies that one uses when reading the data (SS could itself be considered a method).<sup>49</sup>

In discussing diversity and pluralism, Canale argues that diversity is differing opinions on details or particular passages of Scripture. However, these differing opinions

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<sup>47</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 105-106.

<sup>48</sup> Fernando Canale, e-mail message to author, March 17, 2017. Edited for clarity.

<sup>49</sup> Canale, "Interdisciplinary Methods in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal," 377.

all have the same truth base (*SS*). The diversity is due to personality, interest, and temperament, which Canale says is not a negative. Pluralism on the other hand is a negative. It is differing views with different truth bases (*PS*). Canale asserts that *SS* is the only way for unity to happen. A multiplicity-of-sources hermeneutical framework (*PS*) means that any two people will not ascribe the same authority to any of the sources.<sup>50</sup>

A hermeneutic with Scripture as the only source of theology can have major implications for the science and theology relationship. This relationship is where we now turn.

### **The Science-Theology Relationship**

When it comes to the science and theology relationship, Canale, in line with his *SS* hermeneutical framework, adamantly argues that theology, or more accurately, Scripture, should control the science-theology relationship. In his book *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, Canale writes:

If we depart from the *sola Scriptura* principle[,] there is no hope for theological unity in Adventism. If Adventism accepts evolution as the correct way for understanding the question of origins, it simultaneously exchanges one foundational macro-hermeneutical principle of biblical and theological interpretation for another.<sup>51</sup>

Accepting evolution, according to Canale, results in a change in the underlying presuppositions of theology. Thus, science should be subordinate to Scripture. If it is not, he argues, then our views on origins quickly become unbiblical. He writes,

The biblical view on origins substantially departs from and cannot be harmonized with philosophical and scientific [sic] originated explanations of the origin of the

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<sup>50</sup> Canale, "From Vision to System, Part 1," 38.

<sup>51</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 157.

universe such as Platonic dualism, neo-platonic emanationism, pantheism, panentheism, or modern evolutionism.<sup>52</sup>

Scripture needs to be the ruling authority in the science-theology relationship to remain biblical.

On a practical level, the SS principle entails a literal interpretation of the text and an historicist interpretation of prophecy.<sup>53</sup> The creation account in Genesis one and two should thus be interpreted as an actual historical event. Thus creation has occurred (as has been described in the Bible) and has taken place in the recent past and has come about as a result of the active word of God, not by a random process of trial and error that took billions of years.

For Canale's argument, the focus is on evolutionary theory, which most often manifests itself in the historical science (evolutionary biology for example).<sup>54</sup> His argument is not focused as much on what can be called the experimental sciences (chemistry for example). Even so, experimental science still cannot have a normative place in theology.

General revelation is God's acts within nature.<sup>55</sup> This revelation in nature concept is supported in Scripture.<sup>56</sup> However, as Canale describes the concept in *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, Christianity has taken this idea and turned it into natural

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<sup>52</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 205.

<sup>53</sup> Fernando L. Canale, "From Vision to System: Finishing the Task of Adventist Biblical and Systematic Theologies: Part 2," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 16, no. 2 (2005), 119, note 13.

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of the historical sciences, see Ariel Adrean Roth, "Historical Science," *Origins* 13, no. 1 (1986): 5–6.

<sup>55</sup> Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 31.

<sup>56</sup> See Romans 1 for example.

theology.<sup>57</sup> He argues that natural theology has no support in Scripture, but is instead based in human philosophy.<sup>58</sup> It is Christianity's attempt to extract theological content from nature. Canale asserts that general revelation (nature) does not have theological content, and because of this, it cannot be used as a normative source of theological data.<sup>59</sup> God works through words (Scripture) to develop specificity in theology. Nature gives glory to God and is used by Him, but it is not specific in its content.<sup>60</sup> Theology requires specificity and cognitive content, which nature does not have. Canale says, "General revelation is not divine teaching but God's action."<sup>61</sup>

Since natural theology is philosophy, "rejecting natural theology is rejecting human philosophy as a source of revelation," or data for theology.<sup>62</sup> Canale continues, "Christian believers claiming to ground their beliefs on Scripture alone cannot consider philosophy or, for that matter, science as sources of data for theology that is at the *same level* as biblical data."<sup>63</sup>

Canale argues that Christian tradition and theology are based on Greek metaphysics and the idea that God is timeless. This timelessness has become "ultimate" reality; which results in God's inability to interact with temporal "reality" (the physical,

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<sup>57</sup> Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 28-40.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. Italics in original.



time bound world we live in). “Since a timeless God does not act directly within the historical sequence of events, we can understand why in this view history does not belong to what is properly theological.”<sup>64</sup> He continues,

We can also understand why for most Christian theologians the evolutionary rewriting of history does not affect theological (religious) content. This presupposition leads Christian tradition to harmonize creation with evolution by separating the theological (religious) content of Genesis 1 (its truth) from what they consider its historical wrapping (the story). Accordingly, they dismiss the period of six 24-hour days and the historical process the text describes as “non-theological,” and displace God’s creative action from the historical to the spiritual realm.<sup>65</sup>

This, according to Canale, is contrary to biblical hermeneutics and the *SS* principle. He argues that “in biblical thinking *time is of the essence*.”<sup>66</sup> Which means God acts in an historical way in human time and space, not in a timeless instantaneous way, as suggested by the Greek philosophers.<sup>67</sup>

Canale’s general argument throughout his writings, and especially in his *Basic Elements of Christian Theology* is that “the truth of Biblical religion is historical.”<sup>68</sup> He thus rejects the non-historical view of God as a timeless Being, along with the Christian accommodations to evolution and deep-time. According to Canale, this shift from biblical temporality to timelessness became possible because Christianity did not hold to a *sola-tota-prima Scriptura* hermeneutical principle. Timelessness is compatible with

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<sup>64</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 213.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. Fritz Guy, as will be discussed in the next chapter, accepts this presupposition and relegates the Genesis account of creation to the spiritual realm.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 213-214. On the discussion of time and timelessness, see Fernando L. Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, Andrews University Seminary doctoral dissertation series v. 10 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987).

evolutionary theory, and since theology is generally based in Greek philosophy, evolution was accepted as a correct view of origins.

Canale says that unlike Protestant and Evangelical Christianity which hold to tradition and philosophy over the Bible, “Scripture says the origin of created history starts with the history of six days of divine creation that are a continuation of God’s eternal history.”<sup>69</sup> To accept evolution, and thus change the historical story, is to accept non-biblical philosophical and scientific principles as the hermeneutical framework in theology.<sup>70</sup> This results in science governing the science-theology relationship. This framework has timelessness at its centre. Canale writes,

Scripture’s historical view of reality has no room for a gap separating a timeless God from temporal-historical human beings as in Christian tradition’s neo-platonic cosmological pattern. No original gap or rift exists between God’s reality and created human reality.<sup>71</sup>

Canale is arguing against the use of philosophy to determine what Scripture teaches. *SS* is the principle, the hermeneutical framework, that should be used as the macro-hermeneutical presupposition when doing theology and approaching the science-theology relationship.<sup>72</sup>

According to Canale, what is often overlooked is the idea that the creation and evolution debate is not over the evidence, but over presuppositions. He writes,

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<sup>69</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 220.

<sup>70</sup> Canale, “The Eclipse of Scripture, Part 1.” 134-135.

<sup>71</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 220.

<sup>72</sup> Macro-hermeneutical presuppositions are the underlying, and often unconscious, principles that have a major influence on how one is going to interpret the data. These presuppositions are the guiding forces of the interpretation process. They can be likened to one’s worldview.

The creation-evolution debate, including the theological attempt at harmonization, generally takes place at the level of conclusion[s] without taking into account the nature of the processes through which theologians and scientists arrive at their respective beliefs.<sup>73</sup>

This “process” or its presuppositions are the hermeneutical framework that we are discussing here, the SS hermeneutical framework. Science and theology have different hermeneutical processes, which Canale says are not compatible, that determine their respective outcomes and conclusions.<sup>74</sup> “The harmonization between evolution and biblical creation involves two different methodologies and theoretical explanations.”<sup>75</sup> So the general thought that the creation-evolution debate is centred around specific interpretations of a text (Genesis 1 and 2) is incorrect; thus the real issues are hermeneutical and methodological. A general realization of this would change the debate completely. Because of these issues, Canale argues that a refocus on Scripture needs to take place. Scripture needs to be the only theological data.<sup>76</sup> If science, or evolutionary methodology, is allowed to be the data within Christian theology, then Canale argues that this harmonization, “inescapably leads to the abandonment of the *sola-tota-prima Scriptura* principle.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*., 15.

<sup>74</sup> The discussion of whether science and theology should have different hermeneutical processes and presuppositions is an important one. Canale seems to suggest that they should be the same, whereas Fritz Guy argues they should remain separate. Though beyond the scope of this thesis, an analysis of the scientific method or hermeneutical framework should also be undertaken.

<sup>75</sup> Fernando L. Canale, “Evolution, Theology, and Method: Part 3: Evolution and Adventist Theology,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42, no. 1 (2004), 7.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 40. Here Canale is discussing the harmonization of biblical creation and evolution.

The conflict that has arisen between creation and evolution is a result of the *SS* principle.<sup>78</sup> According to Canale, using the *PS* hermeneutical framework does not result in this conflict. He says, “complementation becomes possible when theologians understand that scientific and theological methodologies have different teleological conditions.”<sup>79</sup> The data and methods of theology and science do not overlap.<sup>80</sup> As a result of this multiple-sources hermeneutic, evolutionary theory (science) and theology become compatible. He says,

The attempt to interpret Gen 1 ‘theologically’ flows from within this constellation of methodological conditions. Within this presetting [sic] of the conditions of theological methodology, a ‘theological’ interpretation of Gen 1 searches for the overall objective of theology, namely God, and discards everything else as irrelevant for theological purposes.<sup>81</sup>

When science is a normative source for theology, it requires a change in the way Scripture is interpreted. Canale submits that science should not dictate the objectives and outcomes of theology. He writes, “from the *sola Scriptura* methodological perspective, the definition of all theological objectives should spring from Scripture.”<sup>82</sup> Continuing, he says,

If, instead of following Augustine’s lead, Scripture is allowed to lead so that the overall objective of theology also includes the knowledge of how God relates to

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 18. “The teleological condition refers to the final and intermediate objectives theological methodology attempts to reach by way of its activities and procedures” (Ibid). The same could be said for science. Epistemologically, scientific and theological method are the same. (Ibid, 9).

<sup>80</sup> An example of this separation in practice would be Stephen J Gould’s non-overlapping magisterium.

<sup>81</sup> Canale, “Evolution, Theology, and Method, Part 3.” 18-19. He continues, “This methodological disruption of meaning violates the integrity of the multiple meanings and carefully interwoven referents that a careful exegesis reveals as present in the texts.”

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 19.

everything including creation and history, then the content of the teleological condition of the theological method will be defined in a way that includes rather than excludes the world. Because the biblical definition of the overall objective of theology does not separate but rather historically integrates God and the world, we can now interpret Gen 1 “theologically” without disrupting the complexly interwoven net of meanings present in the text.<sup>83</sup>

Canale is arguing that, unlike Christian theology which, through philosophy has created a dualism between God and nature, biblical reality includes temporality and incorporates God and nature. This results in both a theological and literal meaning arising out of the text of Genesis one and two.<sup>84</sup> Though this may appear to suggest a possible two-source hermeneutic, it is in fact Scripture determining how science should be interpreted.

The acceptance of evolution does not result in “a minor exegetical change in our understanding of Gen 1. Instead, we will be introducing a radical paradigm shift in theological methodology.”<sup>85</sup> Canale writes, “The dismissal of the *sola Scriptura* principle has been based on the assumption that the hermeneutical principles must be built on the latest scientific and philosophical theories.”<sup>86</sup> This tendency is not helped by the pressure from modernism, and to some extent postmodernism, which argue for this assumption.

In regards to the “all-sufficiency” of Scripture, Canale says that Scripture is all-sufficient to interpret itself. No other tool is needed. Everything we need to properly understand Scripture is contained within Scripture.<sup>87</sup> This is not to say that the tools of

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 136.

<sup>86</sup> Canale, “Interdisciplinary Methods in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal,” 388.

<sup>87</sup> Fernando Canale, e-mail message to author, March 17, 2017.

history, language, and other scholarly resources are useless, but these are “needed mostly when we seek to understand Scripture in scholarly detail, as we do in the Seminary or [when] doing theology generally in the context of pre-existent schools of interpretation.”<sup>88</sup> This is done more so in the arena of apologetics or when the “clear understanding of Scripture one gains from reading Scripture is under attack as to its truth.”<sup>89</sup> In personal Bible study, Scripture is generally all that is required.

A possible connection to this, Canale says, is that *SS* could remove the problem of supposed contradictions within Scripture.<sup>90</sup> Whether it would truly do this is unclear at this point; however, at the very least it would remove the contradictions with secular history.<sup>91</sup>

As can be seen, Canale does not hold to a dualistic view of theology and science. Scripture is not confined to the spiritual realm of reality and science to the physical realm with no meaningful interaction between them. Instead, theology and science are a part of the same reality that God has created and sustained throughout history. However, science takes a subordinate place to Scripture. It is analysed, critiqued, and deconstructed;<sup>92</sup> and if it passes this process, it is used as a resource for Scripture.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 138.

<sup>91</sup> Solo *Scriptura* could remove the contradictions by ignoring them.

<sup>92</sup> For a discussion of deconstruction in general, see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 1st American ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

## Summary

Fernando Canale says the *SS* hermeneutical principle should take priority over other hermeneutical frameworks. Scripture should be the only data for theology. Other sources should not be normative factors in determining hermeneutical principles. When we focus on the *SS* hermeneutical framework, and define our hermeneutical principles from Scripture, we will be more in harmony with Scripture itself. Along with this, the theological disunity that Christianity is experiencing will be reduced.

Canale also argues that Protestant and Evangelical Christianity base their theology on the multiplicity of sources hermeneutical framework. Because of this they have allowed science and philosophy to dictate the outcome of theology, creating the schism in Christianity that we see today. Canale wants to focus on “the things themselves,” namely Scripture.<sup>93</sup> Thus, Canale writes that “scientific faithfulness to the *sola Scriptura* principle should replace any humanly originated interpretation of philosophical issues by one of biblical origin.”<sup>94</sup>

Science should be a resource to theology and not a source of theology, with Scripture as the controlling factor in the science-theology relationship. Scripture should be the only source of theological data.<sup>95</sup> The other resources can be helpful at times and should not necessarily be ignored, but they should only be consulted after the *SS* principle

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<sup>93</sup> Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 227.

<sup>94</sup> Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 56.

<sup>95</sup> Canale seems to be more in line with the Radical Reformers than the Magisterial Reformers in this regard. As chapter one described, the Radical Reformers held to the idea that the individual had the right to interpret the Bible for themselves using Scripture as its own interpreter. However, the Radical Reformers did not seem to practice this perfectly all the time. It remains to be seen whether Canale has improved the situation. This will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

has been applied to the issue under discussion. These other resources need to be deconstructed and then reconstructed in such a way that they are in agreement with Scripture which cannot be deconstructed.

Through the *SS* hermeneutical framework, Scripture has authority to regulate the other resources of knowledge and their hermeneutical principles. Science is viewed through the eyes of Scripture and is brought into conformity with it. This results in a literal interpretation of Genesis one and two. The main focus is to give an accurate history of where life on this planet came from, even though it does not give a description of the physical, scientific process of creation. The next chapter will look at Fritz Guy and his *PS* hermeneutical framework.



## CHAPTER 4

### FRITZ GUY: *PRIMA SCRIPTURA*, SCIENCE, AND THEOLOGY

The previous chapter looked at how Fernando Canale views the *SS* framework and how it affects the science-theology relationship. This chapter will look at how Fritz Guy views the *SS* framework and his promotion of the *PS* framework and how it affects the science and theology relationship.

#### **The *Prima Scriptura* Hermeneutical Framework**

Fritz Guy advocates for a *PS* hermeneutical framework. He writes, “While the theological priority of scripture is recognized, in one way or another, by almost all Christians, what is not so well recognized is the fact that scripture is not the *only* ingredient in Christian, including Adventist, interpretations of faith.”<sup>1</sup> The *PS* hermeneutical framework, as Guy describes it, is a framework which has more than one ingredient or source of theology with Scripture as the primary source.

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<sup>1</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*., 137. Italics in original. Guy defines theology as the interpretation of faith or experience. He writes, “More formally, as the interpretation of faith—that is, thinking about the meaning of faith—theology is the activity of thinking as carefully, comprehensively, and creatively as possible about the content, basis, and implications of one’s religious life, including experience (or ‘spirituality’) and practice as well as belief,” 4. Guy took this idea of theology from Langdon Gilkey’s “Theology: Interpretation of Faith for Church and World,” in his *Through the Tempest: Theological Voyages in a Pluralistic Culture*, ed. Jeff B. Pool (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). This is in contrast to Canale who defines theology as the scientific study of God.

Guy lists three principles that should be followed in the interpretation of faith: “(1) Scripture’s priority over every subsequent tradition; (2) its wholeness; and (3) its theological Christocentricity.”<sup>2</sup>

For the grounds of the theological system, the interpretation of faith, Guy lists “three complimentary sources: scripture, secular knowledge, and religious experience.”<sup>3</sup> Scripture is the “narratives and interpretations of revelatory events.”<sup>4</sup> Secular knowledge includes everything that we can learn from the world around us, both natural (science) and social (culture and society).<sup>5</sup> Religious experience is the “spiritual awareness of acceptance, forgiveness, and freedom in Christ as a solution to the problems of mortality, guilt, and meaninglessness;” it also includes God’s “voice” in Scripture and “the sense of God’s presence in private reflection and corporate worship, as well as the experiential consequences of religiously motivated behavior and of life in a community of faith.”<sup>6</sup>

Guy comments that these sources reflect closely the sources of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral with the exception of tradition, which he excludes from his list of ground sources.<sup>7</sup> Tradition is important and a major influence on the “theological agenda,” but it

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<sup>2</sup> Guy, “How Scripture Should Function in Theology,” 18. He also comments that Adventist methodology is the same as Protestant methodology, the only difference is in some of Adventism’s distinctive doctrines. Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, viii. The question arises, and Canale would agree, how can Adventism have the same methodology and different doctrines as other Christians at the same time? If the methods were the same, one would imagine that every denomination would have very similar sets of doctrines.

<sup>3</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 98.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 98-99.

can also be very ambiguous and is thus not a reliable ground for theology.<sup>8</sup> The other sources do not seem to have such problems. He writes,

As a resource for theological thinking, a heritage of traditional understanding [tradition] is exceedingly valuable to a community of faith and to its individual members; it provides a viewpoint, a frame of reference, a place to stand, a foundation. But a traditional interpretation of faith is always subject to revision in the light of a ‘fuller understanding’ of the meaning of scripture.<sup>9</sup>

Guy says, “Christian theological thinking [tradition], collective as well as individual, must always remain subordinate to, and in the service of, Scripture.”<sup>10</sup> Scripture is the primary source of theology, at least in regards to the spiritual realm of reality, but it is not the only source.

In further explaining his *PS* position, Guy writes, “The theological priority of scripture must be maintained over every subsequent Christian theological tradition, including Adventist tradition.” He continues, “The ground of this priority is the fact that it is in and through the documents of scripture—namely, especially the Gospels—that we come closest to the revelation of God in Jesus the Messiah.”<sup>11</sup>

The *SS* principle according to Guy was and is a “polemical exaggeration.”<sup>12</sup> Instead of being a principle that should be practiced as usually defined, its purpose was to oppose the authority of ecclesiastical tradition (Tradition 3) that the Roman Catholic

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>10</sup> Guy, “How Scripture Should Function in Theology,” 19.

<sup>11</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 120. Guy here seems to be identifying revelation with Christ apart from Scripture. Scripture appears to be the witness to revelation, but not revelation in and of itself. See page 126. This seems to be similar to Aquinas. See chapter one.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 137.

Church argued should be the interpreter of Scripture.<sup>13</sup> The Roman Church did not want the individual interpreting Scripture, whereas the Reformers, especially the Radical Reformers, argued that individuals should be allowed to interpret Scripture for themselves, at least to some degree.<sup>14</sup>

Guy argues that more recently the *SS* principle has been used to avoid questions posed by secular knowledge,<sup>15</sup> which he says is relevant for theology. Guy instead says, “Historically and experientially, a more accurate motto is *prima scriptura*, ‘by scripture first of all.’”<sup>16</sup> Guy argues that the *SS* principle does not take into account the complexity of Scripture and the process of interpretation.<sup>17</sup> According to Guy, other knowledge does influence theology and this fact needs to be noted so that any harmful influences can be limited in their effects.<sup>18</sup> Guy also comments that the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, with some modification, namely the removal of tradition as a source, could be an even better option than *PS* as our hermeneutical framework.<sup>19</sup>

In discussing the *tota Scriptura* principle, Guy says that,

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 124. This was especially true for the Radical Reformers. See chapter one, “The Radical Reformation’s Views on *Sola* and *Prima Scriptura* and the Science-Theology Relationship”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 137.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 138-139. Though Guy would not say every influence is a negative. Woodrow Whidden, in his promotion of *PS* seems to be saying something similar. The reality is other sources (or resources) influence theology and we need to be cognizant of this fact. See Woodrow Wilson Whidden, “Sola Scriptura, Inerrantist Fundamentalism, and the Wesleyan Quadrilateral Is ‘No Creed but the Bible’ a Workable Solution?,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 35, no. 2 (1997): 211–226.

<sup>19</sup> “The obvious and important difference between John Wesley’s (1703-1791) list and mine is the omission of ‘tradition’ from consideration here.” Ibid, 98-99, 137.

It is scripture as a whole that is the primary source and norm of Christian theological thinking; so “when we appeal to Scripture, we appeal to Scripture as a whole.” As a basis for the interpretation of faith, scripture functions like the human body by means of a dynamic interrelation and interaction of differentiated parts.<sup>20</sup>

Some would say that Guy does not follow the *tota* principle when he allows science to reinterpret Genesis one and two. Guy responds by saying that Genesis one and two are theological and should not be interpreted literally, so using science to determine life’s origins does not affect the *tota* principle.

Guy argues that culture influences our theology, or interpretation of faith, and raises questions that need to be answered by Christianity in order for it to be relevant to society.<sup>21</sup> Part of the reason that we need to make Scripture relevant to society is that the biblical language used to describe God is metaphorical. As a result, the metaphors that the Bible uses to describe God need to be adapted for 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers. Guy writes, “the more concrete our language about God is, the more metaphorical it is: if we can talk non-metaphorically (that is, literally) about God at all, it is only at a very high level of abstraction.”<sup>22</sup> He continues, “metaphors usually come from the cultural context of the speaker or writer, and so may lose their communicative effectiveness in contexts that are very different.”<sup>23</sup> So the truths of the Bible are wrapped up, at least to some degree,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 126. Guy is quoting John B. Cobb, *Living Options in Protestant Theology; a Survey of Methods* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 178, who is referring to the views of Karl Barth.

<sup>21</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 159-160.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 186. Here Guy seems to be suggesting that God is not a part of our reality as we experience it. This would seem to be contrary to Canale’s temporality (Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*.) and the Christian Realism that Carsten Johnsen argued for in his, Carsten Johnsen, *The mystic “Omega” of End-Time Crisis* (France: The Untold Story, 1980). This Christian realism argues that God is as real as we are and works in our world in ways that we can understand. The descriptions of God in the Bible are accurate and real descriptions of God, they are not metaphorical or abstractions.

<sup>23</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 186-187.

within the cultural metaphors that the Bible writers used to describe God and the reality that He created. This metaphorical language is less clear than the scientific and common-sense language that is used today.<sup>24</sup> The challenge with this metaphorical language is to translate it into modern language in such a way that it retains the cognitive meaning and purpose of the original text.<sup>25</sup>

Because of the metaphorical language of the Bible, contemporary culture influences theology by contextualizing the biblical language. Guy writes,

Contemporary culture does play an important role in theology: it challenges the validity and adequacy of our beliefs; it identifies new questions that need to be addressed; and it conditions our view of reality. But it must not be allowed to define the entire theological agenda; theology also has other concerns—biblical, historical, and experiential. Furthermore, contemporary culture must not be allowed to supply the answers to its own questions. If it does, our theology is simply a mirror of the culture and has nothing to say to it—either as “good news” or as critique.<sup>26</sup>

He goes on to say that we often do not address the questions that culture gives to us, not because we have a strong faith, but because we are lazy in our thinking and do not have faith.<sup>27</sup>

Biblical truth needs to be contextualised and localised into the culture that is asking the questions. The truth needs to be relevant and applicable to its location in time

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 187.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 189-190. The need to focus on the cognitive meaning and purpose is due to the critiques of logical positivism which argues that only the physical realm is meaningful and understandable. This would mainly include the scientific endeavours. Anything that talks about or describes the spiritual realm is not coherent and is nonsense.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 222.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Guy references Helmut Thielicke here. See Helmut Thielicke, *How Modern Should Theology Be?*, trans. H. George Anderson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 1-20.

and space. This is what Guy calls “present” truth. This “present” truth includes modern scientific theories and cultural thinking.<sup>28</sup>

Guy writes, “Neither the interpretation of faith nor the experience of faith itself changes a person’s cultural identity. To the contrary, our cultural identity profoundly influences the way we experience and understand all of existence, including our religious faith.”<sup>29</sup> According to Guy, culture has at least some say in the hermeneutical process.

Guy argues that three concepts guide the interpretation of faith. He writes, “Adventist theological thinking should be dynamically tri-polar—that is related to three bases or ‘poles,’ three fundamental concerns that mutually support and limit one another in a creative spiritual and theological interaction.”<sup>30</sup> The three poles are: Christian Gospel, Cultural Context, and Adventist Heritage.<sup>31</sup> Neither of these three downplay the importance of the other. They all work together within the interpretation of Faith. However, the Christian Gospel pole, does take a “certain priority” over the other two poles.<sup>32</sup> This pole is to mitigate the negative effects of the other two, the narcissism and

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<sup>28</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 231ff.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 233. Taking into account this statement and other statements that are similar, Guy seems, whether consciously or unconsciously, to suggest that in the interpretation of faith, i.e. theology, is to some degree relative to the culture. Each culture has a different theology. Guy does comment later by saying that as Adventists, regardless of the culture, there are some common threads that run through our theology.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 225.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. The Christian Gospel is defined as: God is love. He loves humanity and wants to give them a purpose and an eternal future. Salvation is a gift for those who accept it. Cultural Context: “the contemporary world, with its ideas, understandings, interests, and concerns, is the context of Adventist faith and life. Adventist Heritage is the unique understanding that Adventism brings to the table of the Gospel and the Christian experience, and that this understanding is relevant to the world and needs to be shared.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 228.

consumerism of the Cultural Context and the exclusive denominationalism of the Adventist Heritage.<sup>33</sup> The Christian Gospel is the centre of theology for Guy.<sup>34</sup>

Guy believes that one way to make the Bible relevant to the modern mind is to take into account the scientific knowledge that is present in our world. In espousing a *PS* hermeneutic, Guy says we need to be open to new evidence, not only from Scripture, but also from secular sources, such as modern science.<sup>35</sup> Theology cannot be closed to what is present within reality, this would go against the concept of “present” truth.

According to Guy, Adventist theology needs to “be *ecumenical*, in the wide sense that it should be ready to learn from the modernity and postmodernity with which it coexists.<sup>36</sup> Making sure Scripture has its primary place in theology, Guy does say that theology needs to be careful in not allowing contextualisation to overpower the theological matrix, theology needs to remain true to the Gospel.<sup>37</sup>

One way that Guy allows for the influence of other sources into theology is by saying that “the narratives in Scripture are of course essential to its purpose and are its principal content; but what is absolutely crucial is their *meanings* rather than their *details*.”<sup>38</sup> The theological message of the Bible is important, not so much the history

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 228-229.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 228-231.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 236. Guy continues, “as well as to interact with other religious communities (Christian and otherwise), expecting both to receive and to give, thereby enlarging its own experience and contributing to the larger human good.” Italics in original.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Fritz Guy, “Toward an Adventist Theological Agenda: Some 21st-Century Realities” (2009), 3. Italics in original.



contained in the Bible. This *PS* concept means that the metaphors of Scripture change as time passes. Guy agrees with Keith Ward, when he says, “religious beliefs cannot remain what they were before the rise of modern science any more than ancient scientific beliefs can.”<sup>39</sup> The overarching ideas of God’s love and the fact that He is the Creator of everything do not change, but the scientific and cosmological ideas that were supposedly held by the ancient Israelites need to be revised and contextualized.

In discussing inspiration, Guy argues that instead of a verbal inspiration, a better model can be represented by this formula: “God to community and prophet, prophet to community to prophet, prophet to writing (or prophet to community to writing), and writing to community to canon.”<sup>40</sup> Guy writes that, “Almost everyone who has really *listened* to the Bible and has thought seriously about its ‘inspiration’ finds this latter [alternative to the verbal inspiration] perspective more adequate to the Biblical evidence.”<sup>41</sup> Guy is arguing that the community had a major influence on the inspiration and transmission of the Bible.<sup>42</sup> The community had input into how the Bible was put together and the prophet<sup>43</sup> learned and developed his ideas not only from God but from his society as well.<sup>44</sup> Guy says that this more dynamic and more complicated model of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 5. See Keith Ward, *The Big Questions in Science and Religion* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*, 85ff.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 88. Italics in original.

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of community hermeneutics see Peckham, *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method*, 1-15.

<sup>43</sup> Guy uses the term prophet in a very general sense to include all those who had a part in writing the Bible. For example, Isaiah and Matthew.

<sup>44</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*, 85ff.

inspiration allows for the acceptance of science, “the findings of science can be taken seriously to the extent they are verified and thus more likely than not to be true.”<sup>45</sup> He continues, “There will be a recognition that when Genesis was composed, both the prophet (the author) and the community of which he was a very important part pictured a reality that consisted of the sky and the land, and was protected from chaos by a ‘vault.’”<sup>46</sup> Having now presented Guy’s view of *PS*, the next section will present how Guy views the science-theology relationship.

### **The Science-Theology Relationship**

To avoid confusion, Guy argues there are three definitions for the term evolution, and that it is important to know which one is being discussed at any given time. The first, Evolution<sub>1</sub>, is defined as “long periods of time and major changes in the known forms of life on Earth. This idea involves ‘descent with modification,’ but does not specify the means by which the modification occurs.”<sup>47</sup> The second is Evolution<sub>2</sub>, which “includes ‘Evolution<sub>1</sub>’ and adds the ideas of random genetic mutation and natural selection as means of major changes in life forms.”<sup>48</sup> The third, Evolution<sub>3</sub>,

includes both “Evolution<sub>1</sub>” and “Evolution<sub>2</sub>” and adds the twofold idea that “Evolution<sub>2</sub>” provides a complete explanation for the existence of all known reality and the occurrence of all known phenomena, and that therefore there is no reality corresponding to the word “God.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Guy then says that Genesis one and two have nothing to say about “Evolution<sub>1</sub>” and “Evolution<sub>2</sub>,” but that they do have something to say about “Evolution<sub>3</sub>,” which is a non-scientific idea, unlike “Evolution<sub>1</sub>” and “Evolution<sub>2</sub>.”<sup>50</sup>

According to Guy, “Evolution<sub>1</sub>” and “Evolution<sub>2</sub>” are compatible with Genesis one and two. Since Genesis one and two have nothing to say about evolution as defined here by Guy, science can determine how these chapters are to be interpreted. Thus, science has a major influence on theology.

Guy believes that Genesis one and two should be interpreted theologically. Science and theology describe two different parts of reality, asking different questions and expecting different answers.<sup>51</sup> Scripture was not written to answer scientific questions such as how God created the world. Instead, Scripture is a theology of history, and though it is theologically true, its primary purpose is not to relate factual history but to describe the way to salvation.<sup>52</sup> He writes, “Genesis and geology answer differing kinds of questions that need to be kept separate.”<sup>53</sup> Scripture’s “function is to provide context that is beyond the competence of the research, artistic, and theoretical disciplines.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 163-164.

<sup>51</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 139-141, passim.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>53</sup> Fritz Guy, “Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars,” *Spectrum* 20, no. 1 (1989), 44.

<sup>54</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 146. Guy suggests that there are different levels of explanation and different disciplines, each bringing to the picture something that the other levels or disciplines cannot. In the case of science and Scripture, Scripture cannot explain our historical origins, but science can, 142-144.

Guy asks, “in the light of what we understand scientifically and theologically in the twenty-first century, how shall we interpret Genesis 1?”<sup>55</sup> His answer is that science deals with material reality and theology deals spiritual reality. Science thus appears to explain how we were created because Genesis one and two should be interpreted theologically and not literally.

Since Guy argues that Genesis one and two should be interpreted theologically instead of literally,<sup>56</sup> he writes: “if we understand Genesis 1 theologically, we take it even more seriously than if we understand it quasiscientifically.”<sup>57</sup> We should take into account the “abundance of evidence—some of which can be seen by non[-]scientists with their own eyes if they look in the appropriate places—[which] indicates that [the] Earth is very, very old and that life upon it has been changing gradually for a long, long time (maybe billions of years).”<sup>58</sup> Scripture, when it comes to the physical process of origins does not have priority in the process of interpretation.

There are three evidences, according to Guy, that suggest Genesis one and two should be interpreted theologically instead of literally: (1) “the grammatical and logical subject of most of the sentences, which is not the world or its contents, but God: ‘God said,’ ‘God saw,’ ‘God blessed’”; (2) “the two parallel series of three creative acts: forming the world by differentiation (light from darkness, water from air, land from sea), and filling the world by production (astronomical objects, fish and birds, animals and

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<sup>55</sup> Guy, “Interpreting Genesis One in the Twenty-First Century,” 5.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*, ix-x.

humanity)”; and (3) “the difference in the order of Creation events in Genesis 1 and 2—a difference that is no problem if the two narratives are not regarded as providing a chronological account.”<sup>59</sup> Guy is clearly saying that Genesis one and two should not be interpreted in such a way that would give it scientific meaning. With this dimensional approach that Guy advocates, Genesis one and two and geology cannot be in conflict. Guy describes his dimensional approach by saying,

Dimensionalism regards Genesis and geology, like the larger categories, science and religion, as talking about different aspects of one reality. This approach is a little like operationalism (Genesis paralleled by geology), but in this case, Genesis and geology are seen as ‘intersecting’ because they are both talking about the same subject—namely, the reasons for the actual reality we encounter.<sup>60</sup>

Guy does acknowledge that this approach does raise questions for the Sabbath, Adam and Eve, and the relation of death and sin, but he still believes it is the best option available at this time.<sup>61</sup> A literal interpretation of Genesis one and two reduces the importance and influence of science in theology.

In his article, “Towards an Adventist Theological Agenda,” Guy quotes Ellen White who says,

Science is ever discovering new wonders; but she brings from her research nothing that, rightly understood, conflicts with divine revelation. The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which He works.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Guy, “Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars,” 44-45. I would submit the evidence Guy gives here to support a strictly theological interpretation of Genesis one and two is questionable at best.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>62</sup> Guy, “Toward an Adventist Theological Agenda: Some 21st-Century Realities,” 5. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA; Omaha, NE: Pacific Press, 1952), 128.

Guy, using his *PS* framework, comments on this passage from White by saying,

Although this relationship of “the book of nature and the written word” was originally affirmed in order to encourage the interpretation of natural phenomena in harmony with a literal reading of Scriptural references to creation, *it can also be applied in the other direction.*<sup>63</sup>

According to Guy, science should influence theology, with each shedding light on the other.<sup>64</sup> Guy says there are three areas from which theology can learn “the best current understanding of the ‘laws through which [God] works.’” They are natural history, human physicality, and the eschatological future.<sup>65</sup> Natural history is of interest here, though it can be said that evolutionary theory has a major influence on all three in Guy’s thinking.<sup>66</sup>

Guy does acknowledge the fact that allowing science, especially the theory of evolution, to influence theology raises challenging issues for Adventist theology. One of these issues is the relationship between death and sin,<sup>67</sup> which raises questions about the atoning work of Christ.

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<sup>63</sup> Guy, “Toward an Adventist Theological Agenda: Some 21st-Century Realities,” 5. Italics mine.

<sup>64</sup> It is interesting to note the context of the Ellen White quote. She continues by saying, “Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to supposed conflict between science and revelation; and in the effort to restore harmony, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years,” 128. This conflict between Guy and White will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>65</sup> Guy, “Toward an Adventist Theological Agenda: Some 21st-Century Realities,” 6.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 7.

Guy argues for what he calls “retro-translation.”<sup>68</sup> “Retro-translation” is different from the normal process in two ways: first, it

gives overarching importance to the way the Hebrew text actually reads—what it really *said* and initially *meant*. We assume that the author *meant* something in particular by the words he used and the sequence in which he placed them. Of course, the meaning of the words *then* may have been quite different from what we would mean by our own corresponding words *now*.<sup>69</sup>

This is a close reading of the text, “taking into account its various peculiarities.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, the creation story of Genesis one and two may not mean what we think it means.

The second difference is that “the author’s own usage as we have it in the text takes priority.”<sup>71</sup> The meaning of words is first within the text under study. If the words are not defined there, then their definitions are looked for in other parts of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>72</sup> Guy assumes that the Hebrew author of Genesis one and two and his community interpreted these writings differently than we do, or should do, today.<sup>73</sup>

According to Guy, there were only two known agents in the ancient world, what Guy calls explanaccepts,<sup>74</sup> responsible for causing events: God and humans.<sup>75</sup> Today we have four: God, humans, nature, and chance.<sup>76</sup> The last two are a result of science taking

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<sup>68</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*, 22.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 23-24.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>74</sup> “Explanaccepts” is a combination of the phrase “explanatory concepts”. 97.

<sup>75</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*., 103.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 97-103.

a prominent place in modern thinking. Guy says the difference in the number of explanacepts is what has caused the gulf between the world of the ancient Hebrews and the modern world.<sup>77</sup>

Guy describes how we default to a natural explanation in modern times instead of ascribing everything to the “God” explanation. A question that he suggests we need to ask the biblical text is: “*If we default to a natural rather than supernatural explanation of the phenomenon described, does that change the fundamental meaning of the text?*”<sup>78</sup> In asking this question of Genesis one and two, Guy would say that it does not change the fundamental meaning of the text because the text does not have a literal meaning for us today.

Scripture has given science the authority to determine the process of how life was created. Guy writes,

As created beings, we experience our greatest fulfillment and satisfaction in loving, serving, and worshipping our Creator. But these theological truths do not affect our understanding of the causality of events in the physical world. ... And, conversely, these truths are not in any way changed by the substitution of our modern, natural default explanation of scientific phenomena for the ancient, supernatural one.<sup>79</sup>

This is contrary to the view of some who say that there are major theological problems that arise from allowing science to have such an influence on theology. For Guy, Scripture and science, though they interact in some respects, are left to describe their own realities and domains.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 98-99.

<sup>78</sup> Brian S. Bull, Fritz Guy, and R. E. Taylor, eds., *Understanding Genesis: Contemporary Adventist Perspectives* (Riverside, CA: Adventist Today, 2006)., 63. Italics in original.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 89-90.



Guy argues against the tendency to impose our modern scientific thinking on what we expect from the ancient text.<sup>81</sup> He says that the ancient Hebrews did not think in scientific terms. As a result, there is a separation between science and theology,<sup>82</sup> though they do interact to some degree.<sup>83</sup> The Bible, and specifically Genesis one and two, is “not a handbook of scientific cosmogony or cosmology[.]”<sup>84</sup> He writes, “Genesis 1 is, strictly speaking, *theology*”<sup>85</sup> “It is primarily *an account of the activity of God*.”<sup>86</sup> The purpose of Genesis one and two is not to show how the world came to be, but to show Who brought it to be and our relation to Him.<sup>87</sup> This distinction between the two sources of knowledge has allowed Guy to accept standard scientific theories without contradicting his theology.

Guy writes, “What we have in Genesis 1 is not a description of physical reality as we now understand it actually to be, but physical reality insofar as it was understood by the author and his audience,”<sup>88</sup> which science has since proven to be false. Science takes priority in this case. To drive this point home, Guy writes,

It is hardly surprising that the concepts we use to explain the origin and operation of the universe differ from the concepts of the audience that first listened to Genesis 1.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>82</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*., 142.

<sup>83</sup> This is in contrast to Stephen J. Gould’s “non-overlapping magisterium.” Gould argues that theology and science do not overlap at all.

<sup>84</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*., 143.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 143. Italics in original.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. Italics in original.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 143-145.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 90.

And because we have had time, opportunity, and means to explore these things, and have developed means of accumulating vast amounts of information, it is highly likely that our present concepts and understandings of the natural world are nearer the truth.<sup>89</sup>

Science, when dealing with origins (according to the time and ability of our current state), determines the interpretation of the biblical description of creation in Genesis one and two.

Guy argues that the scriptural evidence refutes a recent creation done by the fiat command of God.<sup>90</sup> “The absence of the distinction between theological and scientific explanations in Genesis (and elsewhere in Scripture) creates an initial obstacle to supposing that Scripture gives us scientifically relevant information for a modern cosmology and/or natural history.”<sup>91</sup> Both science and theology have their respective realms. Scripture is the primary authority in the more important field of study, salvation; science studies the less important realm, the physical world.

Guy argues that the ancient Hebrews believed the earth was a flat disc protected from the water above by a רָקִיעַ (*raqia*) which was a hard metallic like dome over the land. This Hebrew term is often translated as “expanse,” “vault,” and “firmament.”<sup>92</sup> Today, through modern science, it is known that there is no hard-metallic dome covering a flat earth. Since the ancient Hebrews thought that this flat disc and dome configuration of earth was correct, Guy argues that modern science has the correct understanding of the

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 89. Guy is referring to modern, evolutionary science.

<sup>90</sup> Bull, Guy, and Taylor, *Understanding Genesis*, 87.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>92</sup> See: ESV, NIV (2011), and NKJV.

physical process of the universe and its beginnings.<sup>93</sup> This rationale thus allows for a change in the interpretation of Genesis.

Guy says that the Genesis one and two creation accounts are both literal and figurative.<sup>94</sup> It was literal for the ancient Hebrews since they believed it to be a literal and historical account of how the world was created. However, it is figurative for the 21<sup>st</sup> century because science has supposedly shown a literal Genesis account to be false and has given a different account of the process of our origins.<sup>95</sup>

The concept of “present truth,”<sup>96</sup> is highly regarded by Guy. He writes, “‘Present truth’ in the 21<sup>st</sup> century entails current knowledge about the Bible, the world around us, and ourselves.”<sup>97</sup> This “current” knowledge includes modern, mainstream, evolutionary theory, which Guy says is incompatible with a literal and historical interpretation of Genesis one and two.<sup>98</sup> This means that science does not support a literal interpretation.

Guy writes, “The correctness of our scientific knowledge about God’s creation is not a prerequisite for the ‘truth’ of our comprehension of God.”<sup>99</sup> He continues,

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<sup>93</sup> Jeffrey B Russell has called into question the supposed wide spread belief in a flat earth, at least in the early Christian era. See Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth: Columbus and Modern Historians* (New York: Praeger, 1997). For a discussion of רָקִיעַ (*raqia*), see Randall W. Younker and Richard M. Davidson, “The myth of the solid heavenly dome : another look at the Hebrew [raqia],” in Klingbeil, *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*.

<sup>94</sup> “Figurative” here is closely related to “theological” as used by Guy in his other writings.

<sup>95</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*, 106-107.

<sup>96</sup> This concept, also known as progressive revelation was discussed by Ellen White. See Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4th edition., vol. 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948)., 706. And Ellen G. White, “Christ Our Hope,” *Review and Herald*, December 20, 1892, par. 1.

<sup>97</sup> Guy, “Toward an Adventist Theological Agenda: Some 21st-Century Realities,” 2.

<sup>98</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*, 162.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 167.

“Scripture is first and foremost about God and God’s relation to human beings; it is only secondarily about physical reality and its constituent parts such as ‘sky,’ ‘land,’ and ‘sea.’”<sup>100</sup> This goes with Guy’s thesis that, though science is interesting, its importance is nothing when compared to the importance of knowing the God of love who has a plan for His creation.<sup>101</sup> So, Guy argues that science and theology generally do not explain the same realities. They maintain a respectful, explanatory distance from each other.

### Summary

Guy promotes the *PS* hermeneutical framework<sup>102</sup> which argues that though Scripture maintains the primary authoritative role in theology, it is not the only source of theological data. Other sources like science, tradition, and culture play a role in the interpretation of faith. The *SS* framework was a polemical exaggeration that the Reformation used to counteract the negative effects of the Roman Church’s promotion of church authority over Scripture. Though Guy does not fit into any *SS* Tradition easily, he could possibly be considered close to Tradition 1.

Scripture’s purpose is not to explain those parts of reality that the other sources can explain. As a result, science is allowed to explain the origins of the universe as it sees fit. Genesis one and two are theological in nature and do not describe a physical process of life creation.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>102</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 137.

As such, he argues that science, as it is currently understood, is the correct way to interpret the origins of the universe. Life, along with inanimate matter, developed over long ages (13.7 billion years) to its current advanced state. The ancient Hebrews, when they heard and read the account of creation interpreted it literally, but they did not understand the scientific background to the story.

Because of the time that has passed, and the subsequent accumulation of scientific knowledge, Scripture should no longer be interpreted in such a way that it requires a literal interpretation of Genesis one and two. The main focus of Scripture is not on how life and the universe were brought into being; the focus is on the fact that it was created and Who that Creator is and our relationship to Him. “The Genesis accounts of creation still assure us that God is the Creator, the originator of all reality that is not God, and that we exist as the result of an ultimate, generous love.”<sup>103</sup>

For Guy, his *PS* hermeneutical framework allows for science to be included as a source in his theology, allowing him to have a modern cosmology.

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<sup>103</sup> Bull, Guy, and Taylor, *Understanding Genesis*, 65.

## CHAPTER 5

### COMPARISON, CONTRAST, AND EVALUATION

#### **Introduction**

Now that we have looked at the views of Fernando Canale and Fritz Guy on the *SS* and *PS* hermeneutical frameworks and their effects on the science-theology relationship, we can evaluate these views through a process of comparison and contrast. The goal is to discover (1) which elements in the two models are compatible and incompatible, (2) whether one model is better than the other in incorporating insights from the other, and (3) whether an alternative to both models might be needed.

The questions that can be asked of Canale and Guy in regards to *SS*, *PS*, and the science-theology relationship are numerous and far reaching. The questions that will be looked at here are: Are Canale and Guy consistent in the use of their frameworks? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the *SS* framework as defined by Canale with regard to the science-theology relationship? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the *PS* framework as defined by Guy with regard to the science-theology relationship? More specifically, do these frameworks allow for an authoritative role for science in theology? And how do they allow for the authority of Scripture to guide the relations of science and theology?

## Comparison and Contrast

### The *Sola* and *Prima Scriptura* Hermeneutical Frameworks

Guy and Canale are on opposite sides of the hermeneutical framework debate as can be seen from chapters two and three. Canale holds to the *SS* framework and Guy to the *PS* framework. Both claim that their respective framework is correct and that the other is unbiblical. In this section, we will compare and contrast these two views, looking for similarities and differences.

Canale writes, “The *sola Scriptura* view maintains that Scripture alone can provide theological data.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, science, and anything else, cannot be data for theology. “Scripture holds a cognitive privilege that entitles it to become the authoritative source of theological data.”<sup>2</sup> “Scripture becomes the source from which not only Christian doctrines but also the hermeneutical principles for their interpretation should be determined.”<sup>3</sup>

Guy on the other hand, argues that there are three sources, or data, for theology: Scripture, secular knowledge, and religious experience.<sup>4</sup> Scripture is not the only ingredient.<sup>5</sup> Guy argues that *SS* was a polemical exaggeration to oppose Roman Catholic ecclesial authority and should not be used as an overarching hermeneutical framework.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Canale, “Evolution, Theology, and Method, Part 3,” 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> Canale, “Interdisciplinary Methods in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal,” 384.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 98.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 137.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Though Scripture is not the only source of data for theology, “the theological priority of scripture must be maintained over every subsequent Christian theological tradition.”<sup>7</sup>

Guy argues that *SS* does not take into account the complexity of Scripture and the process of interpretation.<sup>8</sup> Other sources of data do influence theology by default and in the Adventist context Ellen G White is a prime example. This is because, as Guy suggests, there are different levels of explanation and different disciplines, each describing and explaining a different part of the theological picture.<sup>9</sup> Scripture’s “function is to provide content that is beyond the competence of the research, artistic, and theoretical disciplines.”<sup>10</sup> Scripture’s purpose is not to describe the part of reality that science can explain.

Canale strongly disagrees with Guy in this. Canale argues that changing the data of theology, adding data, results in a change in theology itself.<sup>11</sup> “Hermeneutical principles and goals depend on the sources of data that theologians choose to base their theologies upon.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, according to Canale, having multiple sources in theology results in an unbiblical hermeneutic. He says that “scientific faithfulness to the *sola Scriptura* principle should replace any humanly originated interpretation of philosophical issues by one of biblical origin.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 142-144.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>11</sup> Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 26.

<sup>12</sup> Canale, “Sola Scriptura and Hermeneutics,” 179.

<sup>13</sup> Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*, 56.



Though Canale and Guy view the parts of Scripture differently, Genesis one and two being the prime example, their hermeneutical frameworks do overlap to some degree. This is most clearly seen in their affirmation of the *tota Scriptura* principle, which has implications for the *SS* and *PS* frameworks. Guy writes, “It is scripture as a whole that is the primary source.”<sup>14</sup> In agreement, Canale says, “The *tota Scriptura* principle refers to the interpretation of all biblical contents and the inner logic from the biblically interpreted hermeneutical condition of theological method (*sola Scriptura*).”<sup>15</sup> So, though there is little that they can agree on, they can agree on this one principle.

Canale argues, in connection with the *PS* principle within his *SS*, that the other resources need to be deconstructed before they can be used by theology. He writes, “deconstruction, then, works not as a criticism of the Bible from postmodern assumptions, but as a criticism of classical, modern, and postmodern theological constructions from the Bible.”<sup>16</sup> For Canale, everything that is not Scripture should be deconstructed from the grounds of Scripture.<sup>17</sup>

Contrary to Canale, Guy does not deconstruct the other sources within the hermeneutical framework from Scripture. This idea is seen in his levels of explanation concept and the idea that Scripture is to provide knowledge that the other sources of learning cannot provide.<sup>18</sup> This is also seen in Guy’s transfer of evolutionary theory into

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<sup>14</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 126.

<sup>15</sup> Canale, “Evolution, Theology, and Method, Part 3,” 16. Cf. Canale, “The Eclipse of Scripture, Part 1.” 161.

<sup>16</sup> Canale, “Deconstructing Evangelical Theology?” 124.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 118.

<sup>18</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 142-144, 146.

his theology. Guy also argues that our culture raises questions that theology needs to answer, concerning our origins for example.<sup>19</sup> Thus Guy deconstructs not only non-biblical sources (tradition, Ellen G. White), but Scripture as well. However, he does not seem to deconstruct science.

Though Canale and Guy agree on at least one point, their frameworks are very different and do not appear to have many points of positive interaction. Next, we will compare and contrast Canale and Guy in how they view the science-theology relationship.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 159-160.

## The Science-Theology Relationship<sup>20</sup>

Canale writes that “the harmonization between evolution and biblical creation involves two different methodologies and theoretical explanations.”<sup>21</sup> Accepting

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<sup>20</sup> Both Canale and Guy use aspects of Ellen G. White’s writings as support for their views on the science-theology relationship. Ellen White does make many statements about macro-evolution being unbiblical and contrary to proper hermeneutics and exegesis. For example, she says, “Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to supposed conflict between science and revelation; and in the effort to restore harmony, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years.

“Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for. The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature. Of the first day employed in the work of creation is given the record, ‘The evening and the morning were the first day.’ Genesis 1:5. And the same in substance is said of each of the first six days of creation week. Each of these periods Inspiration declares to have been a day consisting of evening and morning, like every other day since that time. In regard to the work of creation itself the divine testimony is, ‘He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.’ Psalm 33:9. With Him who could thus call into existence unnumbered worlds, how long a time would be required for the evolution of the earth from chaos? In order to account for His works, must we do violence to His word?” White, *Education*, 128-129.

Here Ellen White is very clear which interpretation of Genesis one and two is to be employed in theology. Canale readily agrees with White’s position, as has been demonstrated. Canale argues that Ellen White supports a SS framework and a literal interpretation of Genesis one and two. Canale, “Sola Scriptura and Hermeneutics,” 202-204. Canale adamantly agrees with this position. White also seems to support a SS hermeneutic when she comments on the use of the Scripture with terms such as “the Bible, and the Bible only,” and commenting on Luther she says he “tested every doctrine and every claim” by Scripture. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1950), 132-133. From this Canale gets support for his hermeneutical framework.

Guy interprets Ellen White differently. Guy discounts White’s statements in regard to Genesis one and two and evolution, as is clearly seen from the above discussion. Instead, Guy promotes her theology of “present truth,” [Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Christian Education* (Nampa, Idaho; Oshawa, Ontario, Canada: Pacific Press, 1943), 520] arguing that we need to accept the advancement of secular knowledge. Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 75-83. Guy gives White a place within the “Adventist Heritage” pole of his tri-polar hermeneutic. Ibid, 237ff. Thus from this Guy seems to support his framework.

One could argue for or against the use of White in the thinking of Canale and Guy. However, both use her to support their respective hermeneutical frameworks and thought processes. In the next section, we will look at the extent to which Canale and Guy view Scripture to be metaphorical.

In support of his evolutionary concepts, Guy uses the concept of “present truth.” Ibid., 75-83.<sup>20</sup> Evolutionary theory is present truth for our time because it has been “gathering support” since the time of Darwin. It is true that there is truth for the present time, but that truth does not negate past truth. Guy, belonging to a Christian tradition which believes in a prophetess, Ellen G. White, who argued for a literal interpretation of Genesis one and two, rejects this for an alternate theory. He calls this accepting present truth. “Present truth,” so called, thus becomes greater than any revelation that God may have imparted to Ellen White.

<sup>21</sup> Canale, “Evolution, Theology, and Method, Part 3,” 7.

evolution “is not a minor exegetical change in our understanding of Gen 1. Instead we will be introducing a radical paradigm shift in theological methodology.”<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere he writes, “If Adventism accepts evolution as the correct way for understanding the question of origins, it simultaneously exchanges one foundational macro-hermeneutical principle of biblical and theological interpretation for another.”<sup>23</sup> So for Canale, not only is Genesis one and two a literal history,<sup>24</sup> but an acceptance of science and macro-evolutionary theory fundamentally changes Adventist theology.

Guy on the other hand argues that science, if accepted, does not change theology or Scripture because they describe different aspects of reality. He says, “Genesis 1 is, strictly speaking, *theology*—thinking and talking about God (which is what the word *theology* literally means: Gr. *theos* and *logos*). It is primarily *an account of the activity of God*.”<sup>25</sup> Thus macro-evolutionary theory is an acceptable origins narrative.<sup>26</sup> Guy writes that “the correctness of our scientific knowledge [evolutionary theory] about God’s creation is not a prerequisite for the ‘truth’ of our comprehension of God.”<sup>27</sup> So for Guy, science and evolutionary theory do not fundamentally change Adventist theology.

Since science and theology describe two different aspects of reality. Guy says that the purpose of Genesis one and two is not to show how the world came into being

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<sup>22</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 136.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 157.

<sup>24</sup> Canale, “From Vision to System, Part 2,” 119. Cf. Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 220.

<sup>25</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*, 143. Italics in original.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 163-164.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 167.

(science), but to show Who brought it into being (theology/Scripture).<sup>28</sup> He argues that we should not impose on the text of Scripture our modern scientific presuppositions. The ancient Hebrews did not understand science as we do nor did they write in a way that would hinder our scientific advancement.<sup>29</sup> Thus Guy proposes dimensionality as the way science and theology should interact, which says that science and theology work to describe different parts of reality and they do not have authority to judge each other.<sup>30</sup>

However, as can be seen from the discussion above, Canale argues that accepting science without it being guided by theology, results in science dominating theology. He says, “harmonizing creation and evolution inescapably leads to the abandonment of the *sola-tota-prima Scriptura* principle.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, for Canale, science is subordinate to theology and should conform to the dictates of Scripture.

Thus, for Canale, theology (based on Scripture) determines the science-theology relationship, guiding the theologians use of science by its purpose and hermeneutical principles.<sup>32</sup> Whereas for Guy, science and theology are kept separate. Each maintaining their own purpose and hermeneutical principles.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 143-145.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 142. Cf. Bull, Guy, and Taylor, *Understanding Genesis*, 53.

<sup>30</sup> Fritz Guy, “Genesis and Geology: Some Contemporary Theological Perspectives,” in *Creation Reconsidered: Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives*, ed. James L. Hayward (Roseville, CA: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000), 299.

<sup>31</sup> Canale, “Evolution, Theology, and Method, Part 3,” 7, 40.

<sup>32</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 136.

<sup>33</sup> Guy, “Genesis and Geology: Some Contemporary Theological Perspectives,” 289-302.

## Evaluation

In this section, we will evaluate whether or not Canale and Guy are consistent in their respective hermeneutical frameworks and try to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their frameworks.

One possible reason for the differences between Canale and Guy is how they view Scripture. Canale views Scripture as a literal, real, historical account of God and this world. The Bible describes the actual actions and events from the very beginning of the world to the present and descriptions of the spiritual realm are real descriptions.<sup>34</sup> This can be seen from his insistence on a literal interpretation of Genesis one and two.

Guy on the other hand views Scripture as a metaphorical and theological account of God and the world. Here, the Bible uses metaphors and constructs to describe God's interaction with history and the spiritual realm, but that these are not actual descriptions of the material world.<sup>35</sup> This can be seen from his insistence that Scripture has nothing to say in regards to how the world was created. I would argue that Guy's metaphorical approach removes Scripture to far from reality.

The approaches to Scripture by Canale and Guy are different. Guy's metaphorical approach allows a *PS* framework and the ability to accept other sources without changing his theology. Whereas Canale on the other hand, does not allow this. Thus his literal approach calls for, even seemingly mandates, a single source hermeneutic, *SS*.

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<sup>34</sup> See for example, Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 174, 213.

<sup>35</sup> See for example, Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 147, 186.

Canale says that “God does not duplicate revelation unnecessarily.”<sup>36</sup> This statement suggests that science and theology do work together to describe reality. Since part of God’s revelation is found in nature, both nature and Scripture have a place in revealing different aspects of God’s revelation. Thus, Scripture and nature have traditionally been referred to as Special Revelation and General Revelation.

This concept of God not duplicating nature seems to be at odds with the solo *Scriptura* or Tradition 0 that Canale advocates. If some form of revelation is found in nature, then one could argue that nature should be included as a source, or a very important resource, for theology. If it is not included, revelation from God could possibly be missed or rejected. In this regard, Canale, at some level, seems to agree with Guy in that science and theology explain different aspects of reality and hence do not conflict.

Guy would agree with Canale that God does not duplicate revelation; however, he would say that nature, assuming evolutionary science, instead of Scripture reveals the physical processes of the origins of the universe. This is partly true, Scripture does not reveal how God used science to bring the universe into being. However, Canale is also correct when he argues that Scripture reveals the history of the origins of the universe, and nature illustrates God’s actions and reveals how the world operates in the present.

If some form of revelation is found within nature, it should be studied so that revelation can be received. It would seem then that science and theology should work together, bringing the two forms of revelation into collaboration. On the one hand, Canale seems to agree with this, but on the other hand he seems to disagree. He does say that

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<sup>36</sup> Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 302-303.

nature provides information and revelation that can be used, but that the Bible writers did not study nature for its own sake.<sup>37</sup> Nature was studied for the sake of its illustrative usefulness for theology.

Guy would agree with at least this much, but he would say science and theology work in different realms and thus do not have the authority to comment on the conclusions and methods of the other.

Canale says the “biblical authors drew very little from nature as a source of meaningful forms of communication” from God.<sup>38</sup> How Canale reconciles this statement with the replete examples of nature revealing God in Scripture is unclear.<sup>39</sup> Passages such as Psalms 19:1-3, “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard” (NASB). Though this content is not necessarily audible, it appears that nature does possess some cognitive content in revealing God.<sup>40</sup> There appears to be meaning in what nature is saying. It tells of God’s glory and what He has done. However, it is also true, as Merlin Nichols points out, that due to the numbing and dumbing effects of sin on our

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 303.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 302.

<sup>39</sup> The largest collection of these descriptions can be found in the Psalms, see for example Ps. 8:3-9 and 139. Jesus also used nature as His textbook for teaching His disciples. See for example Matt 21:9.

<sup>40</sup> The Hebrew word, סַפֵּר, is used in a way that conveys cognitive content. It is often used to describe a person or angel telling something to someone else. See for example, Ps. 119:13 and Job 28:27.



brain, the book of nature is therefore harder to read and requires explanation from Scripture.<sup>41</sup>

Canale rejects macro-evolutionary science, along with many scientists and theologians,<sup>42</sup> myself among them, but he does not give as prominent a place to non-macro-evolutionary science as I would suggest is needed.<sup>43</sup> I would argue that non-macro-evolutionary science should have a higher place in the science-theology relationship than it typically receives in the SS framework. Science can have great explanatory power in answering questions which Scripture raises.

Canale says that the biblical writers focused on history whereas the Greek philosophers and modern scientists have focused on nature as a way to explain reality.<sup>44</sup> Because of this focus away from Scripture, they were led astray. This is likely, as will be discussed below with Timothy Jennings, since the focusing on nature to the exclusion of Scripture results in distorted thinking. Nature by itself does not lead to correct conclusions.

Jennings, in his “God and the Brain” lecture, argues that there are three sources that need to work together when doing theology: Scripture, science, and experience.<sup>45</sup> He

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<sup>41</sup> Merlin Nichols, *The Long Road to Grace: Confessions of a Slow Learner* (Ringgold, GA: TEACH Services, 2015), 37.

<sup>42</sup> See for example Leonard Brand, *Faith, Reason, & Earth History: A Paradigm of Earth and Biological Origins by Intelligent Design*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), and John T. Baldwin, ed., *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note that the existence of Scripture is not essential to the universe as originally created by God. Only since the fall of Adam and Eve was there a necessity for written revelation.

<sup>44</sup> Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 303.

<sup>45</sup> Come and Reason Ministries, *God And Your Brain - Session 1*.

says that focusing on any one of these more than the others produces a skewed view of God and reality.<sup>46</sup> Jennings agrees with Guy's assertion that *SS* was more of a polemical argument against the elevation of unbiblical traditions over Scripture during the time of the Reformers and that it was not intended to be used as the overarching hermeneutical framework as is often suggested. The polemical nature of the *SS* framework should be remembered and the principle applied in this light.<sup>47</sup> Though I do not agree with Guy's or Jennings' indictment of *SS*, I do agree with Jennings that it is often heralded in such a way that reduces or ignores the influence of the other sources, or resources, of theology, such as science. At the same time, I do not agree with Guy's promotion of science over Scripture.

At times in his writings Canale seems to promote Scripture to the downgrading of science (though in practice this may not be the case). This emphasis on Scripture, largely to the exclusion of science, could be the result of Canale's focused attack on macro-evolutionary theory. In his actual thought processes, he might not reduce science to such a low position. His writings seem to suggest that this is the case though he does not emphasize the mutual science-theology relationship that Jennings and I would suggest. This situation is likely the result of Canale's Tradition 0.

The position I would propose would be contrary to Guy's position as well. As has been noted in chapter three, Guy's position on science and theology only allows a minimal amount of interaction, what he calls the model of dimensionality. This

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

separation is not as radical as Gould's "non-overlapping magisterium," but Guy does argue that science and theology should remain in their respective spheres, which I would argue hinders the growth of both disciplines.

Canale seems to take science seriously when it does not contradict a literal interpretation of Genesis one and two. However, he puts constraints or boundaries on science, making it conform to biblical methodology. Guy would strongly disagree with this approach. For Guy, science should be left to follow its own methodology where the evidence leads, and for him, that evidence leads to macro-evolutionary theory. This leads to the question: Should science be left to its own devices, especially since humanity is prone to err? I would agree with Canale that science should have a guide, though it should not dictate how science does its work. However, could the reverse question be also applicable: Should theology also be open to guidance from science, at least in some respects?

Guy's model of dimensionality suggests that theology is to focus on the ultimate questions: where we came from, why we are here, what is the primary cause? Science on the other hand is to focus on the questions relating to "proximate origins,"<sup>48</sup> or the "nuts and bolts" of how creation physically progressed. The point of Genesis is to answer the religious and meaning of life questions, whereas science answers the "how does the universe operate on the physical level" questions. However, one could argue that the meaning of life questions are directly connected to the "proximate origin" questions, especially if these questions have implications for how death, life, and sin are perceived.

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<sup>48</sup> Guy, "Genesis and Geology: Some Contemporary Theological Perspectives.", 299.

Guy does acknowledge some of these implications,<sup>49</sup> but he does not address them in a significant way.

If these two sets of questions are connected, then Guy's separation of theology and science can cause problems for both disciplines. Guy argues that through the model of dimensionality science and theology work in a complementary or parallel fashion. On a superficial level this may be the case, but as will be discussed below, there is a greater mutuality possible within the science-theology relationship than is generally recognized. Though Guy's attempt is admirable, it falls short of what it could be.

The result of this dimensionality is that evolutionary science imposes its theories on Scripture. As science "explains" more and more of the natural world, less and less of Scripture will be relevant, including the miracles, as a prime example. The conclusion after science has "explained everything" is that yes there is a God, but He will likely not be the one described in Scripture, the performer of miracles and the Saviour of humanity.

### **Possible Alternative Model**

I agree with Canale and Guy in that Scripture has a special place that science cannot take. Canale says that "Scripture holds a cognitive privilege that entitles it to become the authoritative source of theological data."<sup>50</sup> Scripture describes what the God-head has done in history, generally, and in saving the human race specifically. Without Scripture, this information would not be known and humanity would be lost. So, Scripture does have the normative role, as in a SS hermeneutical framework. However,

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<sup>49</sup> Guy, "Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars," 45.

<sup>50</sup> Canale, "Interdisciplinary Methods in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal," 384.

science is also needed to have a complete picture of reality; true science and Scripture will not be in conflict, but this lack of conflict does not mean they are separate like Guy suggests. So, in this sense, the hermeneutical framework for the science-theology relationship should also include *PS*.

Along with the description of salvation history and human history in general, Scripture does have a unique place in other areas. It is the source of the principles that guide the other sources. In the context of his *SS* framework, Martin Hanna writes, “there is a unique primacy which Scripture alone possesses.”<sup>51</sup> However, I would argue that as the guiding source, theology should take into consideration science and the claims that science makes, incorporating science into itself. Science should also take into consideration what theology has to say and incorporate it into its theories as well. A continuous exchange of ideas and concepts needs to occur between science and theology.

Hanna writes that “Scripture alone defines the roles of other manifestations of divine revelation including their roles in illuminating Scripture.”<sup>52</sup> In addition, “the unique primacy of each revelation complements the unique primacy of the others.”<sup>53</sup> Similarly, I propose that Scripture is unique (*SS*) and primary (*PS*); it is the lens through which science (general revelation) is viewed and used in theology. I would then argue that this position that Scripture holds does not discount science and does include it as a

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<sup>51</sup> Martin Frederick Hanna, *The Cosmic Christ of Scripture: How to Read God's Three Books, Comparing Biblical Perspectives with the Writings of Ellen G. White* (Berrien Springs, MI: Cosmic Christ Connections, 2006), 41.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 36. Hanna gives an apt description of the various primacies of Scripture, science or cosmos, and Christ. Scripture has epistemological primacy, science has contextual primacy, and Christ has ontological primacy (p. 43).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

theological source or resource, while recognizing its self-imposed hermeneutical principles. However, theology need not accept macro-evolutionary theory. Each revelation (Scripture and nature) rightly interpreted is in agreement with the other. This is similar to how Jennings suggests science and Scripture should relate, though here I suggest a *SS-PS* twist to Jennings' framework. Though Canale has a *PS* principle within his *SS* as well, here I have emphasized *PS*, bringing *SS* and *PS* on more equal terms.

Thus, a combination of *SS* and *PS* is likely the best option when approaching the science and theology relationship. I would strongly suggest that the hermeneutical framework for the science and theology relationship should be *SS*. Scripture has a unique place in transmitting and describing salvation and its history and the hermeneutical principles for itself and the other manifestations of revelation. Science does not give us this information. However, Scripture does not tell us everything about reality, so science is also needed to have a complete picture, thus the framework should be *PS* as well. *SS* and *PS* then must work together.

Canale does have a *PS* principle within his *SS* framework, but it is underemphasized. It can easily get overlooked when analysing Canale's hermeneutical framework. Canale spends only a few pages discussing *PS* and how it relates to *SS*.<sup>54</sup> The rest of his discussion is on how science should not be data for theology. As mentioned before, it seems that his focus on the *SS* aspect of his framework is polemical in nature against those, such as Guy, who over emphasize *PS* and macro-evolutionary science.

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<sup>54</sup> See Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology*, 24, for his main discussion on *PS*.

Guy's *PS* only approach seems to separate science and theology at points where they should be brought together in constructive dialog. Guy does this because He respects the complete autonomy of science to determine its own goals and explanations, which often conflict with Scriptural evidence.

John Peckham has convincingly argued that the Bible writers, prophets and apostles, held their writings and teachings to be authoritative above other sources, because the prophet or apostle was commissioned by God Himself, the revelation was consistent with past canonical revelation, and the writings were self-authenticating.<sup>55</sup> Scripture thus had the authority to be the rule of faith and practice. Science does not have these three criteria; thus, Scripture is unique. However, this does not remove the need for other sources, as Peckham writes,

Canonical *sola Scripture* should *not* be understood to mean that: (1) Scripture is the only source of knowledge; (2) Scripture excludes reason, requires no interpretation, or is subject to private interpretation; (3) interpretive communities and traditions past and present should be ignored or dismissed; or (4) all theological doctrine requires a direct biblical statement (or statements).<sup>56</sup>

From this formulation of the *SS* hermeneutical framework, non-macro-evolutionary science could be allowed to have a prominent place in helping Scripture to explain the world.

As Peckham points out, Scripture is not the only source of information. As described above, Scripture has its unique place, but it is not the only source to be taken into account when doing theology. In agreement with what has been said here, Peckham

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<sup>55</sup> Peckham, *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method*, 28-39.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 142. Italics in original.

writes, “Whereas Scripture may be illuminated by extracanonical factors, it should never be subjected to or judged by any external standard.”<sup>57</sup> Science influences theology (*PS*), but as has been stated, Scripture is the genesis of the hermeneutical principles and thus holds a unique place above science (*SS*) within theological methodology.

Somewhat in line with Peckham’s canonical theology, it may be possible that *SS* applies to Scripture and *PS* applies to science, tradition, philosophy, and other sources. The hermeneutical principles of biblical interpretation, as Canale rightly argues, should come from Scripture itself and not from science (Guy) or philosophy (Augustine). However, as Peckham points out, other sources of information do have an influence on theology<sup>58</sup> and this is where the *PS* principle is applied.

Canale seems to hint at this somewhat, however, as has been described, when he argues for a governing position for Scripture and a subordinate position for science in the construction of theology. Whereas for Guy, theology, in actual practice gives governing authority to science over Scripture.

In contrast, the framework I propose maintains a more equal position for both science and theology in the interpretation of nature and Scripture. Allowing each to have input on the other while at the same time deriving biblical hermeneutical principles for the interpretation of Scripture from Scripture and not from science, philosophy, or tradition. To clarify, this is *right* science and *right* theology. It is not human originated

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 143.

<sup>58</sup> See Ibid, 142.



theories, whether scientific or theological. One could say that it is God's science and God's theology.

Thus, science and theology are allowed to work together to describe reality. Scripture is safe-guarded from its hermeneutical principles being derived from science, philosophy and tradition. While at the same time giving these disciplines their due respect, with Scriptural oversight (though without dictation).<sup>59</sup> This oversight would mean that the use of other disciplines in theology should follow the overarching principles that Scripture lays out.

### **Summary**

Canale has a good starting place with his framework; however, he does not give science as prominent a place as I would argue is needed.<sup>60</sup> Canale rightly argues that hermeneutical principles need to be derived from Scripture, but these principles should not work to the exclusion of other sources of knowledge, especially when those sources can help in the explanation of various passages. Canale does allow some use of other sources when they are seen or conceived of as resources.

Guy on the other hand gives science (including macro-evolutionary theory) hermeneutical control over Scripture. This, like it or not, alters Scripture past the range of interpretation that it appears to allow. Guy also gives science complete autonomy via his

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<sup>59</sup> For Seventh-day Adventists, this model is helpful when determining the place of Ellen G. White. In a strictly *SS* model, White is brought into question as to her purpose and place in theology, even though, Adventists regard her with some authority. A strictly *SS* framework removes this authority. In a *SS-PS* framework, hermeneutical principles for the interpretation for Scripture are derived from Scripture, while still allowing White to have secondary authority within theology as she follows Scriptural principles.

<sup>60</sup> As has been stated previously, science as described here rejects macro-evolutionary theory and its related hypotheses in favour of a more biblical based origin narrative.

dimensionality concept, which as has been pointed out, does not emphasize sufficiently the fallibility of interpretations of science due to the fallen nature of this world.<sup>61</sup> This means science, though needed and helpful, is not one hundred percent reliable without the presence of Scripture, though this does not necessarily mean that having Scripture will by default result in a correct interpretation of science.

Both Canale and Guy agree on a *tota Scriptura* component as being essential to their frameworks, though due to their different views on Scripture (metaphor for Guy and literal for Canale), the outcome of interpretation is different.

Canale argues that one must deconstruct other sources from Scripture. Whereas Guy deconstructs Scripture and other sources from the basis of macro-evolutionary science. As a result, Canale maintains a literal interpretation of Genesis one and two (a recent creation), while Guy argues for theological interpretation that is greatly informed by a macro-evolutionary creation presupposition.

The advantage of Canale's framework is that it is faithful to Scripture by deriving its hermeneutical principles from Scripture. Its disadvantages are that it reduces the importance of science in explaining reality and in helping to explain Scripture as well and, as a result, keeps theology and science separate.

The advantage of Guy's framework is that it promotes the importance of science. However, some disadvantages are incurred as it does not allow Scripture to derive its hermeneutical principles from itself, especially when it promotes macro-evolutionary theory, and maintains a separation between science and theology.

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. page 88. Nichols, *The Long Road to Grace: Confessions of a Slow Learner*, 37. See also Jer. 10:14.

A framework is needed that maintains the uniqueness of Scripture, while at the same time allowing science to do its important work. The framework argued for here is a *SS-PS* hermeneutic. The *SS* component of this framework affirms that Scripture derives its hermeneutical principles from Scripture itself and not from any other source. For example, science does not determine how Scripture is to be interpreted. This allows Scripture to be studied on its own terms and a strictly biblical theology/interpretation to be developed.

The *PS* component of this framework gives Scripture the primary place when doing theology in its broader focus of interacting with science and other sources of knowledge. Science is given the opportunity to (1) study nature freely and (2) to present information that can help explain the whole of reality. Though Scripture is the norm for theology, it is still open to the input of science in theology. The result is a greater understanding of God's creation, both the natural world and the spiritual world.

## CHAPTER 6

### *SOLA AND PRIMA SCRIPTURA AND THE SCIENCE-THEOLOGY RELATIONSHIP: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION*

#### **Summary**

The *SS* hermeneutical framework and its relations to the science-theology relationship has been debated for millennia. Many have argued for *SS* and many have argued against it. There have also been many definitions of *SS* throughout history. Some of the most popular renditions of *SS* have been held by Augustine and Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, Karlstadt and Muntzer, and Wesley. Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin held to a Tradition 1 definition of *SS*, though each nuanced it in a slightly different way. Scripture is normative, but tradition is the environment that Scripture is interpreted in.<sup>1</sup>

During the time of the Reformers, the Roman Catholic Church held to a Tradition 2 position, which held to two sources, Scripture and Tradition, as authoritative.<sup>2</sup> Later on and into modern times, the Catholic Church developed Tradition 3 which argues that the Magisterium has the final authority in theology. Scripture and tradition are interpreted as Rome sees fit.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura*, 151.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

As a result of Karlstadt's and Muntzer's focus on only Scripture, Tradition 0 was developed. This Tradition argues that Scripture is the only source of theological data.<sup>4</sup> Science and tradition should not be allowed to have an influence in the interpretative process and individuals should be free to interpret Scripture as they see fit.

Canale strongly argues that Tradition 0 *SS* is the correct hermeneutical framework when approaching the science and theology relationship.<sup>5</sup> Theology is to have only one source of theological data, namely Scripture. Scripture is the source that gives the hermeneutical principles for doctrine as well as for the interpretation of Scripture itself.<sup>6</sup> According to Canale, movement away from the *SS* framework results in disunity in the church.<sup>7</sup> "Hermeneutical principles and goals depend on the sources of data that theologians choose to base their theologies upon;"<sup>8</sup> and moving away from *SS* requires more sources of theology and thus disunity. Hence, accepting science (evolutionary theory) as a source results in a change in theology.

Consequently, Canale argues that science should not be a source of theology. Science does not have the tools theology requires to do theology properly. He says that accepting evolution does not result in "a minor exegetical change in our understanding of Gen 1. Instead we will be introducing a radical paradigm shift in theological thinking."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 152.

<sup>5</sup> Canale, e-mail to the author, March 17, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Canale, "Interdisciplinary Methods in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal," 384.

<sup>7</sup> Canale, "From Vision to System, Part 1." 25.

<sup>8</sup> Canale, "Sola Scriptura and Hermeneutics," 179.

<sup>9</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 136.

Accepting science as a source, according to Canale, results in a radically different theology, one that is not based on Scripture.

Canale does not completely discount science, or other sources of information, but he relegates them to the order of resources which need to be deconstructed by Scripture before they can be useful to theology.<sup>10</sup>

Canale does include within his hermeneutical framework the concepts of *PS* and *tota Scriptura*. The *PS* within his theology constitutes the deconstruction and application of *SS* on the resources as Scripture tries to determine their usefulness within theology. Everything that is not Scripture is adjusted to Scripture.<sup>11</sup> As such, science is accepted as it conforms to the hermeneutical principles of Scripture. Scripture controls the science-theology relationship.

As a consequence, Genesis one and two are viewed literally, God created in a recent, fiat creation. Canale rejects the long ages for the development of life that science has suggested. However, Canale does suggest that the universe may be older than our planet and that there is variation within species, micro-evolution.

In contrast to Canale, Guy argues that a better hermeneutical framework than *SS* is either *PS* or the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.<sup>12</sup> He argues that *SS* was a polemical concept used to reduce the influence of unbiblical tradition by the Catholic Church. It was not meant to be used as the overarching hermeneutical framework for today.<sup>13</sup> Guy says that

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 106, and Canale, “Deconstructing Evangelical Theology?,” 118. See also, Canale, “Sola Scriptura and Hermeneutics,” 198.

<sup>11</sup> Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology*, 105-106.

<sup>12</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 137-140.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

other sources influence theology by default and so we need a framework that identifies them and mitigates any negative influences, that may result;<sup>14</sup> but this influence is not a negative in and of itself.

There are three things that make up Guy's theological framework: Christian Gospel, Cultural Context, and Adventist Heritage.<sup>15</sup> The Christian Gospel, which is contained in Scripture, is primary (*PS*). These three sources of theology work together in the development of theology. He says, "the theological priority of scripture must be maintained over every subsequent Christian theological tradition."<sup>16</sup> Though Scripture is primary, it does not exclude other sources. These other sources have much to say about the reality we live in. Thus, science should be left to go where the evidence leads.

In regards to science and theology, Guy argues that they describe different parts of reality and thus do not overlap. Scripture and theology study the spiritual realm and science studies the physical realm.<sup>17</sup> As a result, since science proposes macro-evolution, Guy argues that God used this method to create life and that the earth and the universe are very old.<sup>18</sup> The Genesis one and two creation accounts are a theological discussion describing who God is and our relation to Him,<sup>19</sup> but it is not to be understood as a factual, historical account of life's beginnings.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 138-139.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 225.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 139-141.

<sup>18</sup> Bull and Guy, *God, Sky & Land*, x.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 143.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Each discipline (science, theology), explains a different part of reality that the other does not; and because of this, each is needed in theology.<sup>21</sup> Also, each discipline should be allowed some level of autonomy from the other disciplines, while maintaining Scripture's theological primacy. The relationship between science and theology is such that science helps theology to be relevant (culture does this as well). It raises questions and makes us think about what Scripture is actually trying to tell us.<sup>22</sup> Thus this can open the door to those around us who need to hear about Christ.

### **Conclusion**

In spite of the large differences between Canale and Guy, they both have useful components and significant limitations within their respective hermeneutical frameworks. I would argue that Guy imposes his own scientific assumptions onto the text of Scripture. Thus, he effectively hinders their ability to describe reality. The dimensionality approach that he suggests which, though according to him allows them to work in a complementary fashion, in fact does not allow science and theology to interact on a mutually beneficial level. Though he would argue that since they describe different parts of reality there is no need for major interaction.<sup>23</sup>

Canale on the other hand goes too far in the other direction. Reducing science to a discipline that may be useful at times, but overall is not allowed to help Scripture explain the cosmos. Though I do think Canale has a framework that is closer to a working model,

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<sup>21</sup> Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 142-144.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 159-160.

<sup>23</sup> This I would argue, along with Jennings, is not beneficial to either science or theology, since both are sourced in one Creator.



science can and should be allowed to be more helpful to theology. Science can be a source/resource for theology without changing the fundamental principles that Scripture provides because God is both the source of nature and is revealed in nature.

Like Canale I argue that Scripture provides the hermeneutical principles for the interpretation of itself, but I do not agree that Scripture is the only source for theology. Scripture is a unique source, unlike any of the other sources.<sup>24</sup> Scripture provides the hermeneutical principles as well as salvation history. Science cannot provide these things, however that does not mean science should not influence theology.<sup>25</sup>

As such, a combination of *SS* and *PS*<sup>26</sup> is the best option for a hermeneutical framework for the science-theology relationship. But I hasten to add that this is only a preliminary framework that needs more development. A *SS* framework is needed in that Scripture is a unique source of theology that no other source can compare to. *SS* refers to Scripture as the source for the hermeneutical principles of theology. At the same time, a *PS* framework is needed in that other sources do and should influence theology, and this influence should be guided by Scripture. Extra-biblical sources are not left on their own so that each discipline works with the others to explain God and the world that we live in. As Jennings says, when the various sources work apart from the others, a skewed picture of God and reality results.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Here I prefer to use “source” instead of Canale’s “resource” because I want to distinguish my use from his. “Resource” can reduce the potential importance that the other sources can have in theology.

<sup>25</sup> Non-evolutionary science is the science that I refer to here in being a source of theology.

<sup>26</sup> Though not discussed in this thesis, I assume the inclusion of the *tota Scriptura* principle.

<sup>27</sup> Come and Reason Ministries, *God And Your Brain - Session 1*.

It also needs to be remembered that every aspect of theology, whether Scripture, science, tradition, or experience, needs to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, even Scripture itself cannot be understood correctly (1 Cor. 2:14).

At the end of the day, we ultimately have one question to ask ourselves: Do we follow what God has told us or do we follow our own thinking? There are two worldviews that are in conflict: the spiritual and the material. Do we follow what God has told us in Scripture and in nature, or do we follow our own conjecturing? Lewis R. Walton puts it well in his novel *The Lucifer Diary* when he allegorizes the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden. Lucifer, in surmising what Eve is thinking before she takes the fruit, says “*Shall I believe what I heard the Creator say? Or do I believe my own eyes and ears?*”<sup>28</sup> Whether what God has said is in Scripture or nature, in theology or science, this is the question we are still being asked today.

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<sup>28</sup> Lewis R. Walton, *The Lucifer Diary: Story of an Angel: An Allegory* (Glennville, CA: Aralon Press, 2003), 57. Italics in original.

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